

Behind closed doors: discovering and articulating the essence of the personal tutor's practice

DECLARATION

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. This thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere. Parts of the work described in this thesis have been previously published and are reproduced in Appendix 6 and 7 with permission.

Jan Huyton 2011

Abstract

Personal tutoring is a term commonly used in the policy and practice of higher education. Extant literature utilizes the term, but there is no common understanding of its ethos within the higher education profession. Consequently the tacit nature, purpose and outcomes of one-to-one interactions between tutors and students, which have been at the heart of UK higher education since medieval times, risk invasion by policy imperatives such as employability and student retention, or risk marginalization as off-stage activities that occur in invisible space at the periphery of higher education practice.

The thesis begins by exploring research and literature on the social and institutional contexts of activities which involve personal, supportive interaction between tutors and students, alongside literature on emotion work and emotional labour, counselling supervision and therapy culture, using a theoretical lens of critical social interactionism. This produced themes which were used to frame part of the data production and analysis.

The purpose of the research is to explore the essence of the personal tutorial from the tutor's practice perspective, and to locate this in its social and institutional contexts, enabling tutors to illuminate the essence of practice that takes place behind closed doors. The focus of data production is the reflective accounts of tutors participating in the study. Ten participants from a range of UK universities produced brief written reflections about one-to-one interactions with students, followed by an individual interaction between researcher and participant, based on exploring the written reflection. These methods are underpinned by critical theory which relates to the emancipatory, transformative outcomes of facilitated critical reflective practice. Participants revealed critical reflection is unlikely to occur in the absence of facilitation.

The opportunity for tutors to take part in facilitated, critical reflective practice to explore personal interactions with students produced awareness of what shapes the nature and outcomes of personal tutoring, often resulting in transformation and articulation of practice. Contextualization by participants tended to be limited to institutional and personal factors, there was less engagement with wider social policy issues. There was little evidence that participants were aware of literature and practice models relating to personal tutoring, and little evidence of professional development opportunities in this area. Practice generally occurred in invisible space and time, and tended to be based on personal judgement rather than practice ethos. If personal tutoring is to become established as an essential practice at the heart of higher education, action will be needed to recognize and value its ethos, including social and pedagogical purpose.

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Abbreviations

BERA	British Educational Research Association
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FHEA	Fellow of the Higher Education Academy
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
NCIHE	National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education
PDP	Personal Development Planning
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
REF	Research Excellence Framework
SEDA	Staff and Educational Development Association
TLRP	Teaching and Learning Research Project
UCU	University and College Union

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Thesis

This is a study conducted amongst academic staff in British universities: a study of their work as tutors in one-to-one interactions with students (personal tutorials). There are many definitions of personal tutoring as an activity, and many synonyms are used in a range of practice contexts. For the purposes of brevity, this study will use the term personal tutoring to describe any tutorial interaction between an individual tutor and student. The primary focus of data production is the reflective accounts of tutors participating in the study. The emphasis is on communication (interactionism) and context (critical social interactionism, see Thomas, 1999). The purpose of the research is to explore the essence of the personal tutorial from the tutor's perspective, and to locate this in its social, institutional and cultural contexts. As Melanie Walker notes (2006: 5) higher education pedagogy is 'structurally and contextually located [and also] a matter of micro-processes of capability and development, agency and learning in which we make futures.'

The thesis is presented in seven chapters as outlined below. Chapter 2 considers research on the policy and practice of British higher education, alongside literature on emotion work and emotional labour, counselling supervision and therapy culture. As Entwistle and King (2008) point out, research-based analysis underpinned by conceptual arguments provides interest for an academic audience, whilst links to practice and policy help to avoid the remoteness of an over-abstract approach. The literature presented in chapter 2 goes beyond a context-setting role and constitutes a fundamental element of the research process (see Chapter 3). The theoretical framework, draws on the work of Erving Goffman, Jürgen Habermas and Zygmunt Bauman. This framework was useful in locating the literature and the data analysis within broader social and critical theory, thereby shifting the study from descriptive to analytical. Goffman was chosen for his perspectives on interaction between individuals. Lemert (1997) notes that Goffman helps us to notice that individual human experience may not be unique. Patterns of behaviour

and communication with common characteristics can be theorized to explain the latent purpose of the interaction: this study uses Goffman primarily for exploring interactions between students and tutors and between researcher and participants. Goffman has been criticized for his preoccupation with micro-level communication which ignores the macro-level matters within which communication is situated (Johnson Williams, 1986). Nevertheless Goffman's focus on micro-level communication has been useful in framing an interactionist dimension to the analysis, whilst Bauman and Habermas have been more useful in facilitating criticality at meso and macro-levels. Analysis of higher education practice needs to engage with emotion and the role of the affective. At the same time it is important to remain sensitized to the effects of policy themes which may influence the purposes for which interpersonal and affective practice is encouraged by higher education institutions and policy-makers (Leathwood and Hey, 2009).

Both Habermas and Goffman recognize that within organizations, some forms of social behaviour take place in the full gaze of others, whilst other activities take place in contexts which are screened from general gaze. Goffman's dramaturgical imagery (1959) terms these as front-stage and back-stage. There is disagreement about authenticity. According to Wolfe (1997: 183), Goffman denotes the back-stage area as the space for workers to 'regress' into their authentic selves, 'warts and all'. Habermas, on the other hand, distinguishes between a public space which must be preserved for the conditions of democratic citizenship, and a private space which lends itself to individualization and a rejection of the public. Both theories will be useful in interpreting the higher education contexts in which personal tutorials take place, and I have added my own term 'off-stage' to denote activity that takes place outside the institutional framework. Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984, 1987) offers an interesting means of exploring face-to-face interactions to discover potential interplay between what he terms 'lifeworld' and 'system'; lifeworld representing the authentic self underpinned by morality and ethics, and system representing institutional and state agendas. Whilst Goffman can be used to

unpack key characteristics and activities that take place during communication, Habermas sensitizes us to the idea that political and institutional contexts could have influenced the nature of the interaction. Habermas is also concerned with the extent to which communication has become increasingly depoliticized, a theme taken forward by Bauman (2000, 2005) who offers commentary on the characteristics of late modernity. Bauman's 'liquid modern times' are marked by the insecurity of the individual who finds it necessary to invent and re-invent self and identity in a rapidly shifting society. Bauman's liquid modern individuals seek solace in individualized consumerism rather than collectivism and community - a process which, as Habermas also notes, has permeated the delivery of public services. Bauman (2010) comments further on the difference between the welfare state, which he defines as the mere distribution of material benefits, and the social state which is premised on the shared motive and purpose of their provision. Bauman believes that the public-private boundary is perpetually shifting, and that public space can be redefined as 'a scene on which private dramas are staged, put on display and publicly watched' (2000: 70). Habermas was more concerned with the colonization of communicative and discursive space (be that public or private) by the rationalist, systematic instrumentalism of state and market. Indeed Leathwood and Hey (2009) note in particular that the Widening Access/Participation policy targets for higher education, alongside closely monitored employability goals, offer the opportunity for affective pedagogical techniques to be deployed for the purposes of creating a discourse of personal skills and feelings designed to micro-manage students' learning trajectories. This theme is also taken forward by Clegg and Bradley (2006) who argue that higher education policy directives are focused on the production rather than the development of self. There is resonance here with Bauman's lamentation of the decline of politics as a consequence of this playing out of private troubles on the public stage. Politics, says Bauman (2000), was tasked with the translation of private troubles into public issues, an activity that is now grinding to a halt. The venting of private troubles in the full glare of the public gaze does not make them a public issue. This chapter notes research that brings into the public

domain (via publication) the nature of personal problems which students are taking to their tutors. Much of this research does little to contextualize these problems as public issues. In fact it is argued that, in some cases, tutors are made culpable for students' experiences (Baker *et al*, 2006a). The thesis benefits from the recently published findings of the Teaching, Learning and Research Project (TLRP), a large-scale research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The TLRP commentaries *Effective Learning and Teaching in UK Higher Education* (2009) and *The Socio Cultural and Learning Experiences of Working Class Students in Higher Education* (Crozier *et al*, 2008) have been particularly useful in contextualizing the contemporary British higher education experience. TLRP research and commentary move away from the individualization of student problems, and make them public issues.

Chapter 3 explains the methodological framework of the research which is underpinned by critical realist ontology and critical theoretical epistemology. Consequently research methods were designed to produce data via discursive methods that would be revelatory and emancipatory for participants. These methods are described in Chapter 4 along with issues relating to data analysis and ethical considerations. The research project was designed to articulate the experiences of academic staff working as personal tutors. In line with the previously stated critical social interactionist methodology, considerable emphasis was placed on ensuring the researcher facilitated the production of participants' own critical reflections about their personal tutoring practice. Consequently findings are presented in a narrative form in Chapter 5. Findings are presented under themed headings which were derived by inductive analysis, using an approach influenced by grounded theory, combined with a deductive approach whereby themes were applied from the findings of the literature search.

Chapters 6 and 7 discuss the implications of the research findings, one of which relates to the 'off-stage' nature of personal tutoring. Tutors perceived less direct

surveillance of the outcomes or outputs of these activities compared with other areas of institutional monitoring which, whilst potentially offering more freedom of choice and more opportunity to take an approach located in the 'lifeworld' rather than 'the system', reveals consequences for the manner in which tutors experience the personal tutoring workload. The absence of a clear practice ethos presents problems with consistency of personal tutoring provision, and this is compounded in some cases by the relative absence of the 'back-stage' mentoring, or professional supervision that could go some way to assuring safe and ethical working. Collegial support existed in some cases but did not always extend to critical communities of practice, and this tended to compound issues around shared consensus and consistency around personal tutoring provision.

Participants' accounts of their relationships with students tended to indicate the caricature of the diminished and infantilized student, as put forward by advocates of the existence of 'therapy culture,' was largely not encountered. Some tutors did acknowledge an increase in students seeking tutorial support, but this was thought to demonstrate the assertiveness of students seeking support, rather than demonstrating their limitations. Tutors' accounts tend to indicate that some students choose to approach a tutor rather than a student support professional, and that some tutors are approached more than others. A more holistic package of support seems to be offered for students where communication is good between academic staff and student services professionals. This can have the effect of reducing the personal tutoring workload for academic staff by establishing role boundaries. The absence of a clear practice ethos for personal tutoring means that boundaries are unclear, and this can lead to inconsistency in the workloads of tutors and in the service to students. The fact that these issues are usually located off-stage means there is little likelihood of an institutional or a collegial approach to personal tutoring practice, with the consequence that participants in the study tended to make decisions based on personal rather than professionally or collegially determined parameters. Some participants, commenting several months after

having taken part in the study, acknowledged the outcomes of this opportunity to engage in reflective discourse. There was evidence of a more considered approach to the personal tutoring role, and increased awareness of the position of the personal tutoring function within the wider institutional context.

Ultimately the main thesis drawn from the research findings is that personal tutoring is often conducted in an environment of adhococracy and isolation, which can have detrimental effects on the personal and professional lives of academic staff who work as personal tutors. Taking a critical perspective, it can be argued that universities as employers need to become aware of the unrecognized and unsupported emotional labour of personal tutoring. Formal and informal opportunities for formative reflective dialogue that might facilitate support and development for personal tutors are diminishing in a contemporary organisational climate that is increasingly individualized and competitive.

The boundaries of chapters may appear fluid and interrelated. This is indicative of a research project that developed a symbiotic relationship between literature, methodology and data analysis.

Chapter 2: The Context of Personal Tutoring in UK Higher Education

Introduction

Entering and progressing through higher education is a process of transition or change for students (Earwaker, 1992; Mercer and Saunders, 2004; Beard *et al*, 2007; Crozier *et al*, 2008). From an interactionist perspective, Earwaker (1992) examined features of interpersonal and group life to appreciate how people at universities interact with one another and their different environments. He contends that development of identity in roles such as student (and, by inference, tutor) is a process of mutual adjustment; an on-going process in which student and institution come to terms with one another. Higher education pedagogy has been described as a 'complex interaction of at least three agencies – the teacher, the learner and the knowledge they produce together' (Morley, 1998:16). This view is shared by a number of authors influenced by Rogers (1980) and his ideal that learning can encompass ideas and feelings (for example: Noddings, 2003; Palmer, 2007; Ranson, 1998; Macfarlane, 2004; Mortiboys 2002, 2005; Cowan, 2005; Beard *et al*, 2006) thus acknowledging the affective domain of learning and teaching as a legitimate component of higher education pedagogy. Phenomenographic models of student-centredness by authors such as Biggs (1999); Kember (2002); and Prosser and Trigwell (1999) are widely known, but there is an alternative strand of literature that looks more specifically at a tutor's implicit rationale for good teaching (for example, Pratt *et al*, 2010; Courenya *et al*, 2008; Jarvis-Selinger *et al*, 2007). Whilst this is likely to have relevance to exploring the academic and professional identities of personal tutors, it is too extensive to include in this thesis.

Some research focuses on emotions or motives as distinctly separate phenomena from other forms of knowledge and learning, yet it has been found that affective dimensions (specifically mood, feedback, response to task instructions) actually influence other forms of learning and conceptions of difficulty (Efkildes, 2008).

Cowan (2005) helps to place affective pedagogy in its appropriate context – an approach to learning and teaching which recognizes the role of feeling and emotion in reasoning and thinking in the affective domain. Cowan explains that a tutor who recognizes a student is fearful about an aspect of learning, engages with affective outcomes by making the overcoming of this fear a goal for learning. Mortiboys (2005) argues for recognition of the central role of emotional intelligence in learning and teaching interactions. Although this can be differentiated from affective pedagogy (Cowan, 2005) the aims of recognizing and working with student emotions are shared by both concepts.

The legitimacy of the affective in higher education is by no means universally agreed. Brockbank and McGill (2006) note the preoccupation with cognitive dimensions of learning and teaching in higher education. Morley (1998:25) critiques ‘universities dedicated to the life of the mind and the banishment of emotion’, suggesting a philosophy or an ethos of Cartesian dualism whereby it is possible to isolate the rational from the emotional, and to privilege the former. Morley suggests it is not only institutions who seek to rationalize the function of academic tutors. In an argument that resonates with Bauman, Morley argues that the marketization of higher education has led to an instrumental ‘value for money’ ethos amongst some students who see teaching as a commodity to be delivered via ‘teacher-led lectures’. Morley points out, however, that her vision of a more empowering and inclusive feminist pedagogy is often demonstrably effective in delivering support to students. The dichotomy between instrumentalism and inclusive pedagogy has the potential to cause ambivalence amongst students, which might explain the findings of student-focused research, in which the multi-faceted role of university tutor was found to be relatively unclear and complicated (Labaree, 2000; Crossman, 2007). In Crossman’s study, students expected a level of objectivity from tutors who were assessing their work, but at the same time expected feedback to become personalized and intimate. Student participants believed their work to be an extension of themselves, and expected tutors to take this into account in the nature

of feedback. Crossman refers to a sense of shifting in the dynamic between objectivity and empathy, which resonates with Barnett (2000: 35) who describes higher education as a 'site of epistemic contest'.

The Practice Experience

It has been claimed that the personal tutoring system in UK higher education will descend into crisis unless it develops and adapts to changing circumstances (Grant, 2006). Thomas (2006) draws on the much-cited work of Earwaker (1992) who defined three personal tutoring models. The pastoral model involves the allocation of students to a specific personal tutor who is deemed responsible for pastoral and academic support. This model has been in place for many years (Laycock, 2009; Grant, 2006). Where it is applied in a less pro-active manner with fewer resources and less cultural entrenchment, there can be a tendency for some tutors to be less available than others, and some students fail to engage with their personal tutors for a range of reasons (Macfarlane, 2007; Crozier *et al*, 2008). A more structured approach to the pastoral model would rely less on orientations of individual academic staff towards providing tutorial support (Owen, 2002). Earwaker (1992) finds it remarkable that the pastoral model, which was originally developed in medieval times when many students were much younger and tutors were explicitly *in loco parentis*, continues to operate in some universities. He suggests that history and tradition is blinding us to the arrogance that teaching staff can help students without having specialist training or knowledge. Macfarlane (2007), on the other hand, argues that the pastoral responsibilities of the personal tutor should be recovered within an ethos of academic and social integration into university life, whilst accepting that there will be a role for specialist professionals that goes beyond the personal tutor role.

Professional referral models of personal tutoring rely on provision of pastoral and academic support from professionals employed centrally in student services

departments (Thomas, 2006). Typically these include student counsellors, mental health professionals, and advisors on disability, academic skills and finance. Humphrys (2005) describes the student services role as to facilitate, not to solve. Nevertheless, contact between student services is likely to occur only in the event of a problem, so there would still be a role for tutors to work developmentally with students to ameliorate the conditions that may cause a problem to occur. In practice most universities today operate an amalgam of the pastoral and the professional models.

The integrated curriculum model, advocated by Earwaker (1992) and experimented with by Owen (2002) and Yorke and Thomas (2006) involves timetabled group tutorials designed to encourage and facilitate supportive relationships between students and between students and staff. This is a pro-active or developmental approach which moves away from the problem-based, remedial approaches of other models (Thomas, 2006; Laycock, 2009). Earwaker (1992) and subsequently Thomas (2006) concluded that the integrated curriculum model is developmental, rather than remedial, and can be fine-tuned to the curriculum area rather than attempting to impose a standardized tutorial content across a diverse range of academic areas. This model enables greater emphasis on collective forms of support within the culture of academic disciplines, thus moving away from absolute dependency on individualized relationships between tutors and students. This could be seen as Habermasian in the sense that there is emphasis on collective dialogue and understanding, and might also fit with Bauman's ideal that support for personal problems should be available within communities where there are social bonds, rather than from unfamiliar others. It is suggested that tutors would be better advised to see themselves as developers of students' resilience to overcome difficulties, rather than dealing with those difficulties for them (Earwaker, 1992; Humphrys, 2005). This might be achieved if tutors can regard students as belonging to a broader network of social relationships rather than simply as individuals with psychological needs (Earwaker, 1992).

Models of personal tutoring are not defined within policy prescriptions. Unlike PDP, for which there are minimum standards from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA, 2005) in response to NCIHE recommendations (Dearing, 1997), personal tutoring is left much more to institutional discretion, although some institutional review reports on the QAA website comment on the consistency and appropriateness of personal tutoring provision in the context of the overall student experience. Consequently practice can take a variety of forms ranging from informal or *ad hoc* processes to more standardized practice including the three models described above. An edited work *Personal Tutoring in Higher Education* (Thomas and Hixenbaugh, 2006) includes contributions that take a range of positions on the best way to offer an appropriate service for students within limited institutional resources. There appear to be some common threads: that the personal tutor plays an important function in the student experience; that students require more from universities than academic learning; and that there is a need for the services of specialist advisors to work with students on specific personal issues where an expert is required. There is also some agreement between contributors that worsening staff-student ratios mean reform is required to avoid academic staff being overwhelmed with personal tutoring workload, or to avoid students not receiving an appropriate service owing to lack of availability of academic staff. The experiences of some students in the TLRP research (Crozier *et al*, 2008) confirm the uneven provision of personal tutoring, both across and within universities.

Personal tutoring has been presented as a characteristic asset of UK higher education. A report prepared for the Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE) reviewing the future sustainability of learning and teaching in higher education (HEFCE, 2008) highlights substantial changes to the sector since the 1990s, in particular the shift to a mass, rather than elite, system of higher education. It is noted that the student population has a diverse range of needs which are met by universities via an enhanced range of support services, also that there has been

increased emphasis on the preparation of academic staff for their teaching role. The report concludes that, despite these changes, there is a threat to the sustainability of the quality of learning and teaching. This 'threat' is related to resourcing issues which also threaten the nature of the one-to-one personal tutoring that makes the UK higher education system distinctive. This concurs with Macfarlane's view (2004) that the massification of higher education has not been accompanied by commensurate resources, and that this places undue strain on the workloads of higher education tutors. The HEFCE report (2008) makes the assumption that this one-to-one individualized personal tutoring is the epitome of good practice in higher education. As already noted, Earwaker (1992) cautions that the pastoral model should not be accepted uncritically, and certainly the efficacy of this model is not undisputed. Laycock (2009) argues there is evidence to suggest this individualized, reactive model is inadequate for meeting students' needs, and this had been identified in 1994 by the then Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC, 1994), and subsequently by the NCIHE (Dearing, 1997).

The TLRP project *The Socio Cultural and Learning Experiences of Working Class Students in Higher Education* (Crozier *et al*, 2008) draws on samples of students from four institutions. Although the title of the report implies a study only of working class students, the research comments on four different institutional types, and reports on data produced with students from a variety of social backgrounds. The four institutions are referred to as: 'the post-1992 university'; 'the civic university'; 'the elite university'; and 'the FE college'. The latter was a college of further education whose degrees were validated by 'the post-1992 university'. The study found that most students, regardless of the type of university they attended, experienced liberating change and challenge, enabling identity formation and a sense of control over their lives. Students in a study conducted by Beard *et al* (2007) described an emotional journey that affected all aspects of their lives. The study melds notions of transition with the affective domain, presenting a rather complex series of human interactions that involve tutors' use of skills and competence which go significantly

beyond the cognitive transmission of academic information and the assessment of coursework and exams.

It could be argued that a more diverse student population has resulted in increasing numbers of learners who do not have community-based or family-based mentors (Tinto, 1993; Archer *et al*, 2003; Bowl, 2003; Forsyth and Furlong, 2003; Macfarlane, 2004; Furlong and Cartmel, 2009) and are therefore likely to seek support on this emotional journey from university-based sources. If this is indeed the case then diversity, in relation both to the range of social groups and the range of professional/vocational learners, is likely to have resulted in increased numbers of students for whom the university has become both educator and mentor. Mercer and Saunders (2004) found that being a student could lead to alienation from other community members. It should not be surprising, therefore, that students seek a listening ear within the university. This suggests a more significant role for the tutor, he or she being the primary or sole source of academic mentoring. Neville (2007:11) highlights a range of statistical information about specific demographic categories of students. She particularly singles out 'older students' as being more likely to present with problems related to mental ill health, caring responsibilities, part-time working, and risk of non-continuation. Claims that the 'Widening Access/Participation' agenda has created new learners, often from non-traditional backgrounds, for whom learning support will encompass a range of areas including confidence-building, finance, lack of personal or family support, and academic difficulties (Tholstrup, 1999; Simon Frank, 2000; Wootton, 2006) ought to be viewed with the caveat that a deficit model of personal tutoring should not be inferred. As Neville's commentary implies, there is a danger that a largely remedial approach will be taken with some students (Earwaker, 1992; Marr and Aynsley-Smith, 2006), and that this has the potential to stigmatize and disempower. The TLRP report (2009) calls for a move away from the binary distinction between traditional and non-traditional students which, it claims, over-simplifies understandings of student diversity, overlooking the influence of social, cultural and educational backgrounds

and limiting the development of engaging teaching. It is possible to detect here a sense that the 'system', in a Habermasian sense, could be taking a reductive approach to 'Widening Access/Participation'. The 'lifeworld' of morality and ethics, whereby tutors are encouraged to work in the affective domain, tuning in to the human needs of students, is perhaps overlooked.

Crozier *et al* (2008) describe the transition to university life as a class issue. They found that middle class students at all four institutions in their sample had more knowledge of and more preparation for university life and study than their working class counterparts. There were key differences in learner identity between students from middle class backgrounds, who displayed levels of self-assuredness and a sense of entitlement, and a number of working class students at the post-1992 university who displayed lack of self-confidence and a sense that they were unworthy of their university place. Many students at the post-1992 university held what were described as 'tenuous' academic qualifications and it is considered that this, along with their school experiences, may have contributed to feelings of insecurity in relation to the demands of their studies. The TLRP report (2009) recommends that learning in higher education should extend beyond the intellectual to include personal and social development. Current higher education policy incorporates a student employability agenda with PDP as the conduit for delivering on personal and social goals. There has been a tendency for some universities to conflate personal tutoring with PDP (Laycock, 2009). As Laycock points out, much research into PDP has focused on its facilitation of student reflection on achievement against targets which include academic and employability goals. Clegg (2004) utilizes the postmodern critique of contemporary society, individualization and production of self, to make connections with the policy agenda of employability. Describing a fluid socio-economic condition in which individuals need to seek out their identity, Clegg is concerned that the goal of higher education has become the production, rather than the discovery, of self. The QAA policy approach to PDP has gone beyond the movement to equip students

with employability skills 'to the heart of educational practice' (Clegg and Bradley, 2006: 466). This would suggest that government policy is trespassing on pedagogical terrain. Clegg and Bradley's argument is not developed with a 'hands off our territory' vehemence, but they make the case that the implementation of PDP is having a real effect on educational practice, yet it is not underpinned by theory.

This theme is explored in more detail in Clegg (2004) who critiques QAA guidance for its lack of theoretical and pedagogical underpinnings. Clegg's critique could be seen in Habermasian terms as 'the system' invading 'the lifeworld'. Interactions between tutor and student, which might best be developed within an ethical and moral discourse framework, have now become framed by the policy imperatives of employability and the skills agenda (Leathwood and Hey, 2009). In the absence of personal tutoring theory and pedagogy, it is difficult to envisage from where the desired ethical and moral discourse might emanate. This brings to light an emphasis on individualized, personalized interactions which transfer responsibility to the shoulders of the individual tutor or student (Bauman, 2000, 2005, 2010) and effectively depoliticizes responsibility for the outcomes of higher education (Habermas, 1987; Bauman, 2000, 2005, 2010). Smith (2007) uses Habermasian theory to explain his belief that communicative action between tutor and student should be premised on mutual understanding, and holistic, meaningful support process underpinned by the nurturing elements of education. Smith believes that other agendas such as the student-as-consumer: tutor-as-provider position can colonize the lifeworld of both student and tutor to the extent that authenticity is compromised. The context of personal tutoring and PDP puts increased emphasis on an individualized helping relationship between tutor and student. The ethos upon which this relationship is based in relation to pedagogy, value-base and ethical practice is rarely articulated.

Earwaker (1992) was clear that learning and teaching activity, whilst recognizing the needs of students undergoing personal change, should remain distinct from

counselling and other forms of professional emotional support or therapy. The boundary between the two is relatively indistinct and it could be difficult to disentangle and isolate the two areas from a composite problem presented by a student. This scenario was captured by Easton and Van Laar (1995) who reported on a survey conducted in a post-1992 university in which 97 *per cent* of tutors in the sample reported having 'counselled' one or more distressed students in the year preceding the survey. The students were experiencing problems including: examination, career or financial problems; health, accommodation or self-confidence problems; depression, relationships or home-sickness and loneliness. Owen (2002) and Ogbonna and Harris (2004) also found evidence of students presenting to academic staff with a range of personal difficulties. Several years earlier Earwaker (1992: 46) had reported that tutors were dealing with 'acute personal distress' relating to student difficulties including family violence, sexual harassment, divorce, ill- health and unplanned pregnancy. The timing of Earwaker's findings adds weight to the argument that students who present with personal problems are not exclusively a phenomenon of the current 'Widening Access/Widening Participation' policy agenda.

A standardized personal tutoring model would not be the way forward given the diversity of localized and disciplinary needs and conventions. The absence of a common professional ethos on the pedagogical aims and purpose of personal tutoring, however, leaves it open to manipulation by institutional agendas that might not have the needs of academic staff or students at heart. The 'system' would find it relatively easy to shape the 'lifeworld' (Habermas, 1987) given that there is no clear understanding of what the 'lifeworld' consists of. The fact that a range of potential models has been written about and discussed, and the fact that there is no model prescribed at a national level by the QAA, can be seen as offering the opportunity for appropriate personal tutoring to be delivered according to the particular needs of the student cohorts for whom it is provided. The range of models could also be indicative of the lack of a unified ethos, thereby epitomizing

inequalities in the higher education system. The findings of Crozier *et al* (2008) demonstrate how the variance in personal tutoring systems between four institutional types produced inequalities in the student experience; it was the type of institution rather than the type of student that influenced the nature of the personal tutoring system.

The fact that students are coming from increasingly diverse backgrounds does not necessarily make them needy learners or needy individuals. It merely implies that there may be formative questions and concerns that cannot be answered within the home, family or community. In acknowledging what Beard *et al* (2007) describe as 'an emotional learning journey', personal tutors can offer mentoring and advice as students make transformative personal and pedagogical discoveries about the culturally strange academic experience. Many tutors might be unprepared, in terms of time and space or skills and experience, for taking on this mentoring role. This is perhaps a controversial claim to make, particularly when taking account of research findings which indicate that many lecturers believe strongly that the skills of being able to relate well to people, and therefore become a good personal tutor, are embedded in the skills of teaching (Owen, 2002).

A common understanding and application of the pedagogical underpinnings of personal and group tutorials might make for appropriate and common understandings of the parameters of ethical and effective education practice upon which service-delivery could be premised. This would, of course, rely on tutors' engagement with the debates around the various models of personal tutoring, and an awareness of the extent to which managerial imperatives, such as the achievement of statistical targets, has an impact on the nature of their work with individual students. The extent to which this is the case remains largely unexplored. Indeed Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) claim that the work of commentators in these areas, such as professors of higher education, is largely unfamiliar to academic staff in the UK. It is likely that in a performance-driven system where 'if it cannot be

measured, it is of no value' (Barnett, 2000: 39), the less quantifiable aspects of personal tutoring will remain low on the agenda. The TLRP findings (2009) may go some way towards providing an evidence base for a professional and pedagogical understanding of a personal tutoring ethos upon which practice models can be based. TLRP evidence-informed principles (2009) state that higher education policies at all levels should be designed to benefit students socially and economically in consistent and equitable ways. Equity need not lead to conformity, however. The principles of the integrated curriculum model with its emphasis on working within the culture of academic disciplines, may be at risk if equity issues are addressed by rigid policy prescriptions for personal tutoring.

Individualization and therapeutocracy

This chapter has so far concerned itself with the nature of personal tutoring practice and the extent to which institutional models of personal and group tutorials are 'fit for purpose'. Commentators such as Furedi, however, have questioned the extent to which it is appropriate for students, or even universities, to become involved in such activity. Furedi (2004) is concerned with the depoliticization of public life. He coined the term 'therapy culture', the main tenet of which is the invasion of contemporary society by a culture characterized by an assumption of vulnerability and the need for therapeutic intervention to cope with what were previously considered to be the 'normal episodes of everyday life'. Furedi's work underpins *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education* (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009). Ecclestone and Hayes state that study-related problems such as lack of confidence, exam and study stress, feeling judged or inadequate were once considered to be motivators for student learning. They are now portrayed within universities as serious vulnerabilities for which professional help must be sought, students being 'predisposed to think of themselves as needing help with any changes and [not finding it] problematic to ask for "help"' (2009: 89). MacIntyre (2007:31), whose work is often used to underpin practice constructed around virtue ethics, seems to share the view that modern popular culture has become focused on the emotions, arguing that 'the idioms of therapy have invaded all too successfully such spheres as those of education and religion'. The practice-based literature acknowledges the existence of students presenting with emotional problems, and a proliferation of student support services provided centrally by HEIs (Macfarlane, 2007). If Ecclestone and Hayes are correct, this is symptomatic of 'therapy culture' (Furedi, 2004) and is indicative of emotion and student vulnerability being placed at the centre of the relationship between tutors and students. Critics of Furedi, Ecclestone and Hayes have taken this to be a direct challenge to what is perceived by many as legitimate higher education learning objectives linked to self-esteem, social skills,

emotional barriers to learning, and the role of the affective in higher education (Hyland, 2006; Beard *et al*, 2007; Loads, 2007; Leathwood and Hey, 2009). They argue there is a role for emotion work in higher education on the basis of widely acknowledged pedagogical research and theoretical principles discussed earlier in this chapter.

It is difficult to argue with Furedi's (2004) premise that notions of therapy and therapy discourse have permeated British popular culture. He gives examples in his work, and one need only look at the British TV schedule or the shelves of popular bookshops to see the evidence. It is perhaps the case that the articulation of one's emotional thoughts and feelings has become a cultural norm. The vocabulary of therapy culture has become common parlance owing to the tendency in popular culture to play out private troubles in the public sphere (Bauman, 2000). So we are perhaps witnessing a shift in cultural semantics rather than a shift towards therapy culture. It is also possible to argue that the proliferation of campus-based counselling and mental health services, deemed by Ecclestone and Hayes as indicative of therapy culture, have in fact been developed in order to separate out the therapeutic role from the personal tutoring relationship. It is potentially a leap too far to assume, like Ecclestone and Hayes, that this indicates a proliferation of student emotional neediness, pathologizing students' normal emotional responses and responding with therapy. The extent to which therapy culture is permeating higher education institutions goes beyond pedagogical and practice differences and may be better dealt with from a critical social interactionist perspective. For example Chriss (1999a) asks how and why we have arrived at the position described by Habermas (1987) as 'therapeutocracy'. In a comment resonant with Bauman (2000, 2005), Chriss believes this cultural turn has its origins in the societal shift from the communal or collective to the modern alternative practice of association. Chriss (1999a: 5) finds Habermas's therapeutocracy exemplified by the extent to which individuals are coming to rely on interactions with non-familiar others for answering a range of support needs. In a community-based society, individuals

would be able to seek assistance via routine daily interaction with familiar community members. Modern therapeutocracy is founded on formalized relationships whereby a range of professionals offer services according to a 'highly refined division of labor and task specialization characteristic of modern society'. In an informal, community-based context, supportive relationships might have developed organically and unobtrusively. Bauman (2010) locates therapeutocracy in the fact that we have a welfare state instead of the 'social state' he advocates. Bauman consistently argues that the individualization and depoliticization of modern society has placed responsibility for society's ills on the shoulders of individuals. The social state would be the antithesis of the individualization and competitiveness he believes characterize contemporary society. For Bauman, the increasing absence of societies and communities, and the lack of a 'social state' means that problems which were once deemed the responsibility of society and the state have become an individual rather than a collective pursuit. Whilst the curriculum model of personal tutoring appears to be setting out deliberately to create a supportive community of student peers, it could be argued that the pastoral model is based on a communities of practice theory (Wenger, 1998) whereby the culture and physical arrangements give students and tutors the opportunity to develop social bonds together – students effectively being the apprentices of the academic elders. Whilst this model may appear to offer a means of supporting students via social bonds, the increasing diversity of the student population and mode of attendance would make this unworkable in many contemporary universities.

So, many students are likely to arrive at university with expectations of personalized individual encounters with academic staff, whether it is a phenomenon of the modern welfare state, as Bauman suggests, or a cultural phenomenon of behaviour learned from the 'therapeutic' secondary school and further education college suggested by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009). Research (Earwaker, 1992; Easton and Van Laar, 1995; Owen, 2002; Ogbonna and Harris,

2004) reveals significant numbers of students seeking support from academic tutors. Therapeutic education theories (Furedi, 2004; Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009) suggest that there is a tendency for students to believe themselves in need of support and to feel entitled to ask for it. Therapeutocracy theories (Chriss, 1999a) indicate a tendency for individuals to seek support from non-familiar others. These positions point to an overall disposition for students to seek one-to-one personalized support for perceived well-being issues from unfamiliar others in an eclectic higher education context. These theories might perhaps depict a process of individualization whereby students retreat to the privatized space of the individual tutor's office to seek support, or remedies, for personal difficulties, the tutor being cast in the role of unfamiliar other. It is equally possible that students view tutors not as unfamiliar others, but as part of a social or support network. This is perhaps more likely where the pastoral model is operated fully, but might also be the case in any higher education context depending on the practice ethos of the tutor. The unfamiliar other might be the professional advisor based in student services, but will students seek out an appointment with the unfamiliar other or seek a personal tutorial with a familiar tutor? There is also, of course, the possibility that students will use their own resources or turn to family or friends, where this is possible. The choices open to the student will depend very much on the manner in which tutors operate and, as Crozier *et al* (2008) found, this varies between and within institutions.

The formation of supportive friendship communities amongst students is more possible for some types of student than others. The TLRP project (2009) found that learning can only be understood relationally, and advocates pedagogy which embodies a combination of the individual and the social. It is considered that encouraging students to build relationships with others is helpful for mutual knowledge construction, and that this can benefit the achievements both of groups and individuals. The project found that working together sharing experiences and engaging in dialogical processes enables students to find effective support amongst

their peers, and to realize they are not unique or alone in their difficulties. Wilcox *et al* (2005) similarly argue that integration into the social aspects of higher education is as important as academic integration. They found, from a small study of 34 students in one university, that social friendships at university provided the most valued and successful support framework, course friendships and relationships with personal tutors having less significance. The extent to which institutions and tutors develop models that encourage peer support is worthy of further exploration. If an individualized model, or the lack of a model, results in lack of opportunity for developing peer support amongst students, is this recognized as a phenomenon or an issue by tutors in the course of their everyday work? Whatever the case, in any higher education institution there are interactions between tutors and students which remain framed within individualized contexts. It could be argued this has always been so, but that contemporary social and political contexts bring new significance to the situation. If peer support and social integration are as important to students as their individualized relationships with tutors, it would seem that opportunities for both forms of interaction should co-exist in every HEI. Yet Crozier *et al* (2008) discovered significant differences between institutional types in their sample. 'The elite university' which operated the collegiate, pastoral model, presented opportunities for a close individual relationship between student and personal tutor, and opportunities for social integration both with peers and with academic staff because students lived in close proximity and ate together in college. There were also small group tutorials based on academic study. Students in 'the civic university' tended to live in halls or student accommodation, had some opportunity to engage in small group tutorials, and were also able to access module and personal tutor support easily. For students at 'the post-1992 university', opportunities both for individual and collective interaction were more limited. Many students lived at home rather than in student accommodation, and there were attempts to phase out personal tutorial contact and replace it with electronic contact, although it was still possible for students to access face-to-face support if they

sought it out. It could be suggested that this is a deficit model, students seeking out personal contact only in response to perceived difficulties.

Increasing numbers of students are part-time or live at home, which links to difficulties incorporating a student *habitus* and fosters an inferior model of participation in higher education (Holdsworth, 2006). Indeed Earwaker noted in 1992 that modularization and diverse modes of attendance had rendered the student population a very diverse range of individuals who co-incided on specific tasks for limited periods only. If the opportunities for peer interaction, development of student *habitus*, and acquisition of academic, cultural and social capital exists only outside timetabled hours, it is clear that those learners who live at home or who are unable to take part in activities because of work or family commitments, will be disadvantaged. This would include part time students, and a study by Kember (1999) confirms a role for tutors in helping part-time students negotiate the competing priorities of work, family and study. Crozier *et al* found that this was an issue mainly for working class students at 'the post-1992 university' but, again, it is important that trends do not become stereotypes. Whilst students at 'the post-1992 university' were largely living at home and had commitments that prevented them from remaining on campus when teaching was over, the research team noted that university-based social facilities were limited in any case. Clearly there are students who, for whatever reason (institutional, personal or cultural) are not able to engage with peer support networks, so might be more likely to find it necessary to seek personal guidance or support from tutors. Again this is a lottery for students and depends on a number of factors relating to the personal tutoring model deployed by institutions, and the availability or inclination of tutoring staff.

Therapeutocracy and therapeutic education theories consider the effects of cultural and political shifts toward a therapeutic state. There is research which takes this a step further by suggesting that higher education has been specifically targeted as a form of intervention for people with mental ill health. Baker *et al* (2006b: 32)

interpret the New Labour policy discourse as indicating higher education has become part of the social welfare system because of 'explicit encouragement of people with mental health problems to undertake courses'. They find there has been insufficient debate around the student support work HEIs are encouraged to undertake, and suggest that such work is increasingly viewed by policy makers as a means of addressing the social inclusion and the employability policy agendas. They argue that education has become one of the sites for addressing human failure and contend that the discourses of 'obligation, dysfunction and inclusion' have been significant in the twenty-first century educational world. Despite these claims of increasing mental ill health amongst the student population, Connell *et al* (2007) report that there has been insufficient research beyond small studies in single institutions. The CORE Outcome Measure (CORE-OM) norms benchmark the number and psychological health of students across multiple sites receiving university counselling, against an age-matched sample of young people receiving similar treatment in NHS primary care settings. The figures suggested that the students using university counselling services closely resembled the mental health profile of young people using NHS primary health services (Connell *et al*, 2007). They argue that policymakers have overlooked the role universities can play in ameliorating the effects of mental ill health amongst the student population, and point to the fact that the number of available student counselling appointments has fallen because funding has failed to keep pace with increasing student numbers. So, Baker *et al* suggest that mentally ill people are directed towards universities as part of the social inclusion agenda, whereas Connell *et al* play to the employability agenda, claiming that early preventative intervention with younger students might reduce future numbers of adults who are economically inactive owing to mental health problems. This could also be seen as linking with the social inclusion agenda, but with an ethos that seeks to reduce mental ill health amongst students, whereas Baker *et al* argue that HEIs are being asked to be part of the solution for adults already experiencing mental ill health. In either case, some form of awareness-

raising and boundary-setting should be in place for personal tutors and students who find themselves interacting on issues of mental health.

A study of students' psychological well-being undertaken by the University Quality of Life and Learning Project (UNIQoll) (University of Leeds, undated) compared longitudinal data on students from cohorts 2000-2003, and 2001-2004. The project found that indicators for student mental ill health included: having high financial concerns; and perceived high levels of pressure from paid work. Better levels of psychological well-being were reported from students who had a positive perception of their social support network, and students from what is termed 'disadvantaged' social backgrounds had more negative perceptions of their networks than those from 'advantaged' backgrounds. This chimes with the lack of equity discovered by Crozier *et al* (2008). Here again the importance of the social support network is significant to improving the student experience, giving further credence to personal tutoring that moves away from individualized models and places emphasis on development of social networks.

Stanley and Manthorpe (2001) researched the experiences of personal tutors working with students who have mental health problems. They found HEIs reluctant to take formal responsibility for student mental health. In situations where mental ill health is interfering with academic progress, Stanley and Manthorpe argue that HEIs may find themselves having to assume a caring role for which they are not prepared. The study found communication problems between academic staff and community mental health practitioners, each of whom tended to view the other as the responsible agency with duty of care. This had been explained by one student counsellor as attempts by academic staff to pass responsibility to an expert mental health practitioner. This is surely an understandable tactic, particularly when the study found a significant number of personal tutors had revealed feelings of inadequacy or lack of expertise when dealing with student mental health scenarios. The fact that a significant number also felt they had been able to draw on

their own expertise in order to work with students experiencing mental ill health should perhaps be of equal concern here, given that they were not appropriately supported or supervised in this role. Stanley and Manthorpe's conclusions reveal an assumption that HEIs, via a process involving academic staff, have a role in making referrals to community mental health services. The extent to which this is a legitimate role for academic staff is contestable, however. Classification and terminology are important factors. Mental health issues might range from homesickness, which could be classed as mild, reactive depression, to major clinical psychiatric disorders.

The expanding and multifarious nature of the UK academic's workload leaves little space for supporting students with mental health problems, even if such a role were considered appropriate. Baker *et al* (2006b) argue that Universities UK guidance issued in 2000 and 2002 makes academic staff aware of a duty of care around the surveillance and monitoring of students with mental ill health. The same guidance emphasizes that it is important for university welfare and counselling services to work in conjunction with community mental health services. Stanley and Manthorpe claim, however, that HEIs are contesting the 'caring role', which is perhaps the point where debate needs to occur. Literature that considers emotion work as a legitimate strand of affective pedagogy is not advocating that tutors should become social welfare professionals with a counselling role, yet there is a danger that these two forms of 'care' might become conflated. As Rana (2000) points out, if a student develops a serious mental illness or attempts suicide, questions are asked about the extent to which pastoral support was available, whether the student was put under excessive pressure academically, whether tutors were alert to signs of failing mental health. She argues that less emphasis is placed on the successful ways in which university staff support individuals who do not have serious mental health problems, but who are not yet emotionally prepared for the unfamiliar demands of university life. Rana's position implies a tacit, perhaps invisible process of supporting new students emotionally, which could be seen as early primary

intervention to prevent escalation into acute mental health difficulties. Are students going to academic staff for help as an alternative to university mental health services? Or are students (many of whom live at home) accessing community-based support services? If academics are taking on this role, it is invisible (behind closed doors) extraneous, unrecognized and therefore unsupported. If tutors are being approached by students with mental health problems, how can a tutor recognize when it is appropriate to make an onward referral, acquire the skills required for sensitive referral, and become supported in working safely and ethically with such scenarios? In the absence of a collectively agreed practice ethos of personal tutoring, the extent to which these specific personal problems can be located within the boundary of affective pedagogy and personal tutoring is unclear.

The nature of individualized contact between students and personal tutors is likely to vary in its context and its purpose. The fact that such interactions take place in private, often in a tutor's personal office, means they can remain invisible within institutions. Opportunities to explore social, political and structural factors that might be causes of a student's difficulties are thereby overlooked. So, for example, how many students are experiencing mental ill health because of the pressures of paid employment, resulting from financial difficulties? To what extent are modes of learning, teaching and assessment affecting students' well-being? These questions can perhaps be addressed by a large-scale student experience study. There are, however, questions that can be explored by researching the experiences of academic staff working as tutors in individualized scenarios with students.

Goffman was interested in characteristics of everyday behaviour that go some way to explaining its purpose. An in depth qualitative study of tutors' experiences of the individual tutorial, a study that examines front-stage, back-stage and off-stage activity can go some way towards answering questions around tutors' well-being, safe and ethical practice, the very nature of the interactions, the type of issues being raised by students and the manner in which tutors respond. This would also go

some way to determining the extent to which tutors are engaged with the wider contextual issues, institutional agendas and the bigger socio-economic issues with which the provision and manner of personal tutoring are inextricably linked. In order to explore contextual issues more fully, it would be necessary to engage tutors in a research project that prompts them to reflect and critically evaluate the manner and context of their personal tutoring interactions. To what extent are academic staff ameliorating detrimental effects of education and social policy by offering support to students in the private space of the personal tutorial? If this work is invisible, how can we know the effects on a tutor's workload and well-being? Tutors working with students to address personal difficulties is not a new phenomenon, nor are the debates about the boundaries of the tutor's role. Yet questions remain unanswered. Social theory has been used to explore the student experience in the context of therapeutocracy and the decline of community-based forms of support, research has demonstrated that, for those students who are able to access it, the support of peers can be preferable to seeking out support via a personal tutor. The lack of a clearly defined ethos of personal tutoring practice means that access to peer support and personal tutoring are not offered equitably. This affects not only the student experience, but also the experiences of academic staff. The next section will consider research and commentary on the experiences of academic staff working as personal tutors.

The Tutor's Experience

There are distinct perspectives on the role of academic staff in the personal and emotional development of students. Macfarlane's *The Academic Citizen* (2007) describes a 'service' role that goes beyond researching and teaching in the context of an academic discipline. This includes 'counselling students', and 'mentoring colleagues', roles which, Macfarlane argues, have been trivialized or overlooked by institutions. Ecclestone and Hayes, on the other hand, state that 'teacher training for higher education indicates how strongly the turn towards the therapeutic university is taking hold' (2009: 99). They assert that 'an academic life which requires self-

denial and disinterested enquiry is being undermined by the promotion of vulnerable 'identities' and an obsession with feelings' (2009: 104). This, they claim, is indicative of the fact that education at all levels is focusing more on learning about oneself rather than learning about one's academic subject. Ecclestone and Hayes seem to assume that academic staff have signed up to notions of therapeutocracy and individualization. Whilst their description of culture and society has strong resonance with therapeutocracy critiques of Bauman and Habermas, they make the assumption that academic staff concur uncritically with the *status quo*. They do not consider the possibility of Goffmanesque on-stage: off-stage activity as a means of retaining academic integrity within an unfavourable policy context. They offer as evidence symbolic artefacts such as posters, policies and documents without exploring the complexities of actual exchanges between tutors and students. Macfarlane, on the other hand, has produced data with groups of academic staff based on their decision-making in response to realistic practice vignettes. It can thus be argued that Macfarlane's commentary offers a more evidence-based judgement on tutors' role perceptions. *Macfarlane* (2004) in a statement resonant with Habermas (1987) purports that values are essential to higher education, and is concerned that some academic staff consider values to be tangential to their discipline or role. Macfarlane (2004) advocates a virtue ethics model to underpin the integrity of university teaching.

Virtue	Examples of application
respectfulness	in teaching students and in relations with colleagues
sensitivity	toward students seeking tutorial support; conducting peer review activities
pride	in adequate preparation to teach
courage	to innovate in teaching practice; confront challenging situations with students and colleagues
fairness	particularly in relation to assessment issues; investigation of complaints about colleagues
openness	in relation to self, peer and student evaluation of practice
restraint	in conveying the teacher's ideological and/or theoretical position; checking emotional reactions
collegiality	in managing courses and invoking consultative processes with students and colleagues

Table:1 Virtues for university teaching (Macfarlane, 2004)

Habermas (1987) and Goffman (1959, 1961, 1967, 1974) speak of the rules and rituals that underpin moral order and human acts of communication and understanding, and Bauman (2005) indicates there has been a shift towards individualization which flies in the face of mutual interest and understanding. So the virtues outlined by Macfarlane may be displaced by the political, economic and social conditions that frame institutional culture and practice. Macfarlane is concerned that academic staff might fail to recognize the moral obligations that relate to academic and professional identity. He believes this can be addressed by institutions being more explicit about the 'service' role, and a shift in reward and recognition structures to take account of this. As Barnett (2007: xii) states in the foreword to Macfarlane's *The Academic Citizen*, academics may become increasingly calculating about undertaking workplace activities that will generate economic return or research advancement. The close support of students is unlikely to produce either of these outcomes. Thus the notion of community involvement is under threat, decisions being taken for instrumental rather than moral reasons. Questions may be asked, then, about whether personal tutors are politically literate practitioners who recognize a distinction between instrumental and value-based judgments or decisions. And for those academics who are sensitized to such distinctions, is there a clear sense of the professional ethics and value-base of personal tutoring, or do personal tutors make decisions based more on their personal parameters. Is the locus of academic virtue and citizenship in the personal or the professional identity? Can the two be separated?

Humphrys (2005), writing from the perspective of the student services function, argues that the development of values in relation to how students are supported on their journey through university originates with early twentieth century American universities. He cites Herbert Hawes, the first Dean of Men at Columbia University in 1924, as having advocated holistic education encompassing 'the physical, the social, the aesthetic, the religious, and the intellectual aspects each in its appropriate manner'. Moving on to a statement from the 1949 publication of the American

College Personnel Association, the additional goal of enabling students to interact in social situations was added, giving a value system of individuation and community which, Humphrys claims, still remains to this day in the increasingly diverse UK context. These values are taken forward at Leeds University (where Humphrys is based) according to three basic principles. First, services work to enhance student autonomy and individuation. Students should be encouraged to use their own resources to overcome difficulties. Noting therapy culture discourse which suggests that university support services pathologize everyday difficulties, Humphrys clarifies that student services exist to facilitate, not to solve. This distinction is, of course, dependent on the lens through which the services are viewed. Furedi and his active adherents Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) seem to view most forms of student support as 'the illegitimate importation of therapeutic techniques' and the 'infantilisation of learners' (Furedi, 2009: vii). The second principle is that services offered should be appropriate for the needs of every individual. This is presented within the framework of ensuring services are accessible to students coming via the 'Widening Access/Widening Participation' route whilst acknowledging that all such services will also be pertinent to the needs of the more traditional student, neatly avoiding the deficit model. According to Humphrys the third principle of community-based support is unique to the Leeds model. This is achieved by promoting dialogue about student support amongst staff and students, the outcomes of which are 'integrated into the centre of the university's thinking'. This dialogic exchange chimes strongly with Habermas's 'ideal speech situation' and is taken forward via a series of committees established to develop an integrated approach amongst all categories of staff, including student sabbaticals. Clearly Humphrys' account gives only one perspective, and other stakeholders might take a different standpoint as to the efficacy of this inclusive, collegial system. Whatever the case, this is an account of a student support system underpinned by clearly articulated shared values, and a critical interactive engagement with the implementation of government policy initiatives.

The dialogue in Humphrys' account is indicative of a collective or collegiate approach to the defining ethos of supporting students. A virtue ethics model as advocated by MacIntyre (2007) applied to the higher education context by Macfarlane (2004, 2007) would encourage the development of character traits relative to the perceived role and culture of the personal tutoring process. MacIntyre's virtue ethics is premised on his notion of 'practice'. 'Practices' are socially established coherent co-operative activities, which have historically determined standards of excellence based on accepting the judgements of a past authority. MacIntyre describes 'goods internal to a practice' which can only be achieved by engaging in that 'practice' to that standard of excellence. Moral goods should emanate from a community engaged in a 'practice' rather than from moral imperatives external to that 'practice'. He argues that our moral positions relate to received wisdom, and that moral debate should lead to renewed shared consensus. The context of ethics and morality has been lost because of the demise of canons of consistency, and a collective failure to question the system.

There are two key tenets of MacIntyre's notion of 'practice' which can be used to explore the context of personal tutoring. The idea of a socially established co-operative activity underpinned by historically established canons is resonant of Wenger's communities of practice (1998) whereby novices are socialized into organizational norms by building collaborative relationships, develop practice knowledge and understanding through joint enterprise, and produce a set of communal values through shared repertoire. Although Wenger shares with MacIntyre an understanding of the intimate relationship between learning and practice, the primacy of negotiated moral consensus is not fully present in Wenger's analysis. Habermas (1974) offers a better commentary on moral consensus and communicative action which is taken forward by Wilson (2005) who argues that universities should be able to discover value questions which are of significance to society, by engaging with wider constituencies. The implication here is that if an appropriate practice is to be negotiated for personal tutoring, the debate and the

consensus need to take place amongst a range of stakeholders that goes beyond the immediate higher education context.

MacIntyre argues that the first principles of moral choice rest with the individual. Given the lone working context of the personal tutorial, tutors would certainly need to be committed personally to a practice ethos because the opportunity for circumvention of practice conventions or ethos is clearly present. Goffman (1955, 1967) argues that moral rules of conduct in face-to-face encounters do not develop intrinsically with the individual, but they are derived through experience of the requirements of the rituals of social interaction. Any interaction rituals developed by a particular group or society must, argues Goffman, be bound by particular rules and understandings of that form of social encounter. Working within an identified framework of ethics can be at odds with working within bureaucratic and procedural mechanisms (Macfarlane, 2004; Scott, 2004). Bureaucratic rules and regulations tend to be superseded by common dispositions that evolve according to implicit theories of practice (Bourdieu, 1972). Trowler (2008) uses Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* to explain his own theory that higher education teaching practice consists of a series of 'moments' which include tacit and implicit habits, practice conventions and notions of shared meaning and conventional behaviours. If practice ethos develops outside the formal staff development processes of the organization, so there is resonance with Bourdieu's idea that implicit practice rules evolve amongst practitioners rather than in response to organizational imperatives. This notion of communities of practice could imply a Goffmanesque front-stage and back-stage division, although a more recent sequel to *Communities of Practice* (Wenger *et al*, 2002) advocates that organizations should seek to measure and manage the values and knowledge created by practice communities, thereby melding the practice and the organization. Trowler (2008) argues that teaching and learning practice is often contested within teaching teams, and equally teams might engage in highly bounded practices about which there is strong consensus. This argument assumes the existence of communication between individuals about the nature and purpose

of practice. It does not, however, deal with situations in which teaching teams or institutions are silent on a particular practice. Following Trowler's theory about the sometimes implicit, or tacit *habitus* of higher education teaching practice, silence might be the result of unspoken conventions or simply indicate that a particular topic is not discussed within the team. Personal tutoring interactions have the potential to exist outside the boundaries of the teaching team. They are not always timetabled, they are not clearly visible to anyone other than the tutor and the student, so their inclusion in team discussions relies on the personal tutor being willing to share his or her, often informal, personal tutoring practice experience.

An example of the co-existence of formal and informal practice is suggested in a review of research on student support (Smith, 2007). Smith found that tutors are working in an increasingly marketized policy environment, and despite being forced to work in the interests of the employing institution by reducing the amount of supportive contact with students, tutors may operate outside this regime by setting up communicative relationships with students. Smith refers to a 'common culture' of university teachers which sits in opposition to notions of the student as customer with its debased educational relationship whereby the teacher merely delivers and the student consumes, without the benefit of nurturing human relationships. Smith does not comment on how this culture is manifested, but states that many tutors engage in supportive communication with students which takes place outside the policy and practice context of the workplace. The impression given is that tutor workloads no longer have space for such interaction with students, but that it goes on anyway. Smith argues it is this extraneous activity from tutors that continues to prop up the higher education system by giving students the individual support they need, despite policy imperatives which attempt to counter such an approach. The hidden nature of this work may be a barrier to consensus-building, thereby affecting the potential for development of a practice ethos.

Another way of exploring how practice can exist beyond the recognized organizational *façade* is the notion of 'professionalism' (Hoyle, 1974; Hoyle and John, 1995). Hoyle identifies two distinct aspects of teachers' professional lives: *professionalism*, which is embodied in bureaucratic statements and status and has been subsequently described as 'the irony of presentation' (Hoyle and Wallace, 2007: 19), and *professionality*, a term which he uses to describe the body of skills, knowledge and process upon which teaching practice is based. Hoyle and John's definition of professionalism (1995) is underpinned by a notion of teachers' responsibility and incorporates three key elements. These are the body of skill and knowledge which is broadly agreed necessary for effective practice; the capacity for exercising sound judgement when faced with competing options and demands; and engagement with professional development, reflectiveness and ethics in order to ensure the teacher is equipped with the competences required to make effective judgements. Professionalism is about the image presented externally to auditors and stakeholders and is the official public face (Hoyle and Wallace, 2007). It is underpinned by symbols such as qualifications and classifications in order to give an impression of logic and accountability. This symbolic presentation belies the reality of practice, whereby a Goffmanesque process of back-staging occurs to keep information from the inspectors, an approach described by Hoyle and Wallace (2007: 21) as 'principled irony'. Whilst being alert to potential criticism of the irony of practice for its apparent endorsement of performativity, Hoyle and Wallace claim the existence of creative insubordination strategies congruent with 'principled professionalism' (2007: 23). So returning to the principle that bureaucracy and procedure can be at odds with ethics of practice (Macfarlane, 2004; Scott, 2004), we can perhaps distinguish between the professionalism that is demanded, and the professionalism that is enacted (Evans, 2008). Returning to the topic of personal tutoring, and to Smith's (2007) notion of the 'common culture' of university teachers being at odds with the policy context of marketization, Smith's proposition that tutors work in back-stage or off-stage supportive relationships with students could be categorized as a creative insubordination strategy. Missing from this analysis is a

sense of how the 'principled professionalism' is developed in this scenario, or how broad agreement is achieved amongst tutors as to what constitutes the skills and knowledge required to make judgments in a professionalism sense. Can this be linked to the communities of practice theory? If so, how are tutors socialized into the practice community instead of being inducted into the policy ethos of marketization? Scott (2004) purports that ethics have the potential to act as the glue that helps hold together an increasingly diverse higher education system and practice. It has been argued that the idea of a broad collective understanding of the ethics and values of higher education would offer the basis of a new professional identity from which higher education tutors can speak back to managerialism which has been sufficiently powerful to displace notions of pedagogy (Walker, 2001; Clegg and Bradley, 2006), but to what extent are individual tutors cognisant of the ethics and values associated with the ethos of higher education and, more specifically, of personal tutoring? Managerialism has effectively displaced the service role so action must be taken by academic staff themselves in order to recover the ethical and moral value base of academic practice (Macfarlane, 2007; Nixon, 2008). Literature that considers the ethics and virtues of the university is readily available (for example: Halsey, 1992; Barnett, 2000; Nixon, 2008, 2010; Scott, 2004; Williams, 2005; Macfarlane, 2004, 2005, 2007). It has been suggested there is a tendency for academics to engage more with their discipline area than with their vocation as a lecturer (Macfarlane, 2004) and the extent to which the wider academic community engages with literature on the ethics and virtues of the university is not really known. For Walker (2006) the educational issue for higher education is developing the capacity to make good judgements, and subsequently what we actually mean by good judgements. She believes the overarching theory of practice should be sufficiently vague to allow the detail to be worked out by practitioner teams at a local level.

Macfarlane (2004) is keen to point out that most lecturers acknowledge and negotiate ethical dilemmas as part of their higher education teaching practice. His

data, collected from more than two hundred participants via a variety of educational development courses and conferences, demonstrates the thoughtful way in which lecturers contend with ethical issues and dilemmas presented in vignettes designed to explore appropriate tutor responses and actions. Some vignettes produced a variety of responses which Macfarlane related to individual attitudes and institutional cultures. We might consider the extent to which culture and practice of academic disciplines affect the manner in which tutors approach ethical issues and dilemmas. Becher and Trowler (2001: 148) reported a 'clear tendency to view the world from one's own disciplinary perspective', but Macfarlane (2004: 126) rejects the idea that 'lecturers stand in starkly opposed camps' in relation to negotiating the balance between emotional engagement and professional distance. He finds that most lecturers are aware that such dilemmas exist and are prepared to exercise agency in negotiating this balancing act as they develop an understanding of their professional practice. It is likely that the lecturers taking part in Macfarlane's study were 'academic citizens' motivated to engage in dialogue, develop and apply knowledge, sensitive to their responsibility and their service role. It is perhaps not surprising that they had a sense of agency in relation to the moral dilemmas of teaching practice and the need to negotiate their professional boundaries. Indeed Ridley (2006) noted that participants in research that considers the boundaries of personal tutoring practice were likely to be motivated by a personal engagement with the topic. The fact that Macfarlane's vignettes produced a variety of responses resonates with Crozier *et al* (2008) who discovered variable student access to personal tutoring. Both Macfarlane (2004) and Smith (2007) draw our attention to the fact that tutors take an approach that shows respect and sensitivity to the needs of students, yet when Baker *et al* (2006a) reviewed literature that evaluates the performance and helpfulness of tutors from the student perspective, they found it characterized academic staff as unwelcoming, unaccommodating and unwilling to shift their culture and practice to answer the needs of non-traditional students. Baker *et al* are concerned that absolute judgements about the student experience and the role of tutors have been made on

the basis of how students have articulated this. They are not denying the nature of the students' experiences, but find that some commentators have been too quick to judge tutors and make them culpable, thereby overlooking social or structural factors. They argue that individual tutors are being made culpable for student experiences which have their origins in structural societal inequalities. Whilst not denying that some tutors might fit the stereotype of 'crusty, hidebound academic', they point out that there are systemic socio-economic factors at work that privilege some social groups over others in relation to social and cultural capital for accessing higher education, the existence of which is supported by the findings of Crozier *et al* (2008); Forsyth and Furlong (2000); Forsyth and Furlong (2003); and Furlong and Cartmel (2009). If tutors are focused simply on interactions with individuals, and not encouraged to become aware of the wider social and professional implications of their practice, there will always be a risk of overlooking structural factors which might have implications for self and others. Macfarlane and Gourlay (2009) argue that developing an understanding of the literature about teaching and learning used to be a means of challenging the *status quo*, but has now become a means whereby 'universal truths of teaching and learning' are reproduced to demonstrate conformity to the mantras presented on qualifying programmes for fellowship of the HEA.

In his Habermasian critique of the 'colonization of the lifeworld' by 'systems steering media' including 'cognitive rationality' Chriss (1999b: 187) explains how everyday life and interaction can become distorted. He claims that this is not so much noticeable at the level of face-to-face interaction, but at institutional level. In a critique of society which resonates with Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) Chriss claims there is a perception that family, schools and teachers have ceded their role in the formative development of young citizens to 'counsellors and other gurus'. He goes on to argue (1999b: 192) that 'first-line agents of socialization such as parents, teachers, and other community leaders, have not gotten it done...So it is time for agents of formal social control to do the work.' If this logic were applied to the

everyday personal tutorial activities between higher education tutors and students, one might argue that critical analysis of such interaction could reveal the extent to which critical themes such as therapeutocracy, individualization, gendered work, emotional labour and a range of social inequalities are being produced and sustained, wittingly or unwittingly, through tutor-student interaction or through the socio-economic context that has caused the interaction to take place. Literature, collegiality and staff development activity have a potential role in raising awareness of the context in which practice takes place. If Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) are right, however, most academic staff are unaware of the work of academic commentators in this area. Further exploration through direct empirical research would help uncover the nature of academics' engagement with literature and critical reflection in the area of their personal tutoring practice.

It is possible that working conditions might affect academics' willingness or ability to engage with literature and debate about their practice. The expansion in student numbers has not been accompanied by commensurate resources (Macfarlane, 2004; Thomas, 2006), so it is likely there has been some level of work intensification for tutors as a consequence of worsening staff-student ratios. Literature dealing directly with this topic is limited, and Ogbonna and Harris (2004: 1202) indicate that this phenomenon is 'comparatively poorly understood'. Ogbonna and Harris found work intensification contributed to high levels of stress, a lack of team spirit and widespread discontent and dissatisfaction. This appeared to relate to increasing lack of autonomy linked to aggressive policy implementation by institutions. Regular surveys of work-related stress amongst academic staff are conducted by the University and College Union (UCU). Kinman and Court (2009) found that nearly half of respondents from higher education found their job highly stressful. The most frequently reported stress factor was 'lack of time to undertake research', followed by 'excessive workloads'. Higher education staff reported low levels of well-being compared with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) 'Psychosocial Working Conditions in Britain in 2008' survey (Webster and Buckley, 2008). Suggestions for

tackling occupational stress include: greater esteem and appreciation; greater staffing resources to cope with increased student numbers; more mentoring and support; a more collegial work culture; better management of change; greater equality in employment; more worthwhile opportunities for professional development; greater recognition of teaching.

Emotion Work and Emotional Labouring

In jobs where there are high demands and limited resources, exhaustion and disengagement are likely to develop, and this is what tends to be termed 'burnout'. It has been suggested that organizations should take the opportunity to examine the demands and resources related to specific job roles, thereby taking forward tailor-made interventions, or professional supervision, that would improve performance at task and contextual level (Brady *et al*, 1985; Wilkins, 1997; Bakker *et al*, 2004; Hawkins and Shohet, 2007). The literature on counselling supervision highlights that the nature of a supportive encounter can represent an imbalance between what a practitioner gives to others and what they receive for themselves (Brady *et al*, 1985; Hawkins and Shohet, 2007). Ogbonna and Harris (2004) found many lecturers felt that their own needs had become overlooked in the race to achieve organizational imperatives. There was an imbalance between what they felt they were giving for the institution and for individual students, and what they felt they were receiving for themselves. There was a sense in which this perceived imbalance was felt, in part, as a response to intermittent role changes. At various points in the working day, lecturers could be found offering a sympathetic ear to a distressed student; taking part in a management meeting; performing in a teaching role; or undertaking research. It has been noted that sudden role change in the working day can be a major occupational stress factor (Cooper and Baglioni, 1988). The complexity of the academic staff workload and the increasing requirement for role transition has increased (Barrett and Barrett, 2009; Ogbonna and Harris, 2004) and institutional responses have tended to result in more formal, measurable workload planning

models (Barrett and Barrett, 2009; Hull, 2006). Barrett and Barrett (2009) found that there is great diversity in terms of how workloads are allocated within and between universities. Processes ranged from informal systems to comprehensive metrics models. This had led to concerns about equity, and they recommended balancing academic workloads in order to align individual aspirations and institutional imperatives. Included earlier in this chapter are comments from Smith (2007) who claims that the workload imbalance between institutional imperatives and individual tutor aspirations has its roots in the reduction by institutions in the amount of time allotted to supporting students via the personal tutorial with the result that academic staff undertake extraneous emotion work in personal tutorials. Tight (2010) on the other hand believes that academic staff aspire to spend time on personal research, which is being squeezed by requirement to spend time on administrative tasks.

Tight (2010) has compared a range of studies into academic workload from the 1960s to the present day. Whilst there have been methodological changes over time, Tight nevertheless finds it possible to compare longitudinal data in a broad sense. The most significant finding is that overall academic workloads increased considerably in the 1960s, but there have been only minor increases from the 1970s onwards. Tight concludes that the contemporary impression of workload expansion may be linked to the increased amount of time spent on administration, rather than an actual increase in hours. His paper is based on secondary interpretation of survey data and does not claim to offer empirical evidence of how academics experience their workloads during their daily working lives. Nor is it able to quantify what counts as administrative activity. Given its lack of visibility, is personal tutoring even counted as part of the academic workload calculation? These questions must be asked directly of tutors themselves if the actual experience of workload intensification and its relationship with personal tutoring is to be exposed.

Many universities are now reviewing their processes for managing workloads, with many moving towards more formal metrics systems in order to address issues of equity and transparency (Barrett and Barrett, 2009). It is claimed that there is a push from the HSE to reduce workplace stress and that transparent workload systems can help with this. Barrett and Barrett comment, however, that equitable, balanced systems cannot address absolute workload. It is possibly the decrease in autonomy and trust, and the lack of personal choice in workload planning, that academics experience most keenly. Cooper and Baglioni (1988) explain the link between environmental stresses and mental health, which centres on individual perceptions of the locus of control. Individuals who perceive that they have control or influence in their activities are less likely to experience stress than those who see their actions as irrelevant to the outcome. This might go some way to explaining the relationship between perceived lack of autonomy and high levels of stress and dissatisfaction in Ogbonna and Harris's study, and has resonance with the well documented increase in managerialism and performance measurement of UK higher education, executed during a period of public sector transformation which began in the 1980s, resulting in an overwhelming emphasis on what can be measured and tested. Ogbonna and Harris found that academic staff reported emotional labouring as a major cause of work-related stress, yet the UCU survey (Kinman and Court, 2009) demonstrates that academic staff report experiencing stress in relation to research pressures and workload pressures, but there is no mention of the effects of emotion work or emotional labouring. This is likely to be indicative of the timing of the survey and its proximity to the last Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The difference in results between the two surveys might also be methodological, the differences in experience articulated through survey responses compared with face-to-face interviews where interaction and probing by the researcher was made possible.

Elsewhere in the literature it is reported that workers, managers and unions have together created a therapeutic workplace according to an idea of vulnerability and diminished status created by the rise of therapeutic education (Ecclestone and

Hayes, 2009). It is claimed that therapeutic interventions such as counselling and self-development are offered to staff who are increasingly diminished rather than skilled and confident. Such interventions, they claim, are seen to serve as a panacea which will prevent workers from recognizing and rallying against exploitative working conditions. Staff development which engages with the emotional; appraisal systems, reframed as personal development reviews, which engage with the affective domain; managers with open-door policies; these are amongst the examples given by Ecclestone and Hayes under the auspices of management-as-therapy. The proliferation of staff counselling services, they claim, marks a drift towards viewing the demands of the academic's role as psychologically damaging. They do not deny the workload intensification experienced by academic staff, but are not clear about what they consider to be an appropriate way of dealing with the effects of this phenomenon. In the absence of clear evidence pointing to the existence of this therapeutic ethos, it is difficult to derive tangible significance from the claims of Ecclestone and Hayes. They draw our attention to important points, however, in relation to how academic staff experience personal tutoring in the context of workload intensification. There is evidence that researchers have discovered worrying levels of burnout amongst academic staff (Earwaker, 1992; Easton and Van Laar, 1995; Stanley and Manthorpe, 2001; Owen, 2002; Ogbonna and Harris, 2004), but little evidence in the literature of institutional interventions to address this.

Bakker *et al* (2006) define burnout as a work-related stress reaction characterized by three elements: exhaustion; cynicism towards students and colleagues; and reduced professional efficacy whereby one loses confidence in one's ability to fulfil job responsibilities. So a tutor suffering from burnout might experience fatigue, display indifference towards colleagues and students, and believe their performance has suffered accordingly. This contrasts with the notion of work engagement characterized by: high levels of energy and mental resilience; willingness to invest effort and persistence in the face of difficulties; and absorption in one's work. Those

who experience work engagement are thus predisposed to difficulties in detaching from their work. In an earlier study Bakker and Schaufeli (2000) found that teachers who talk frequently with their burned-out colleagues about problematic students had the highest probability of experiencing contagion in relation to the negative attitudes expressed by their colleagues. It has been argued elsewhere, however, that individuals who interact with others are more likely to spend time suppressing their emotion in interactions with others at work. Sloan (2004) found that workers who interact frequently with others are more likely to experience anger, and that those in 'people occupations' are more likely to express their anger to someone other than the target of the anger. A study of homelessness officers in the USA (Garot, 2004) discovered the extent to which the judgement of workers can be affected by the emotional displays of others. Garot found that, despite a professional display of detachment, the homelessness officers were 'unavoidably sensitive' to the emotional displays of applicants. Goffmanesque backstage activity (such as humour) was used as a coping mechanism amongst the staff team to ameliorate the effects of dealing with an angry service-user. There was a tendency for staff to give a more introverted response and adjust their judgement in favour of service-users who broke down in tears. Garot (2004: 761) makes a higher education comparison as follows:

... a professor grades a student's work in a private office in front of the student and then decides their final grade. One can well imagine how, if such a grade is an F, anger and/or tears may well result. One can also imagine how, if such tears are in response to a "subjective" evaluation, the professor may be inclined to change the grade.

Garot's higher education analogy perhaps highlights the importance of preparing tutors for the potential inequity that might arise out of an emotional reaction. Overall Garot's findings point to the role of back-stage collegiality as a means of coping with the effects of an emotionally charged personal tutorial interaction.

Counsellors and other professionals working with client problems such as loneliness or depression would not be reliant solely on peer support and collegial

interaction to monitor and deal with workplace stress. They would, according to professional and ethical guidelines, have in place appropriate training, support and supervision (Easton and Van Laar, 1995; Morley, 1998). These are considered essential requirements in the avoidance of stress, dissatisfaction or burnout yet tend not to feature in higher education staff development activity. Academic staff have reported extensive engagement in 'counselling' students on some quite complex personal issues, yet there is no widely recognized facility for the professional supervision outlined in the counselling literature. Professional supervision is not therapy. It is a means of ensuring that one-to-one interactions taking place within professional organizations in unobserved private space are conducted professionally and ethically (Copeland, 2001). It is a means by which personal tutors can check the nature and boundaries of their practice, a means of avoiding rather than promoting the need for therapeutic intervention for tutors. So whilst it is helpful that Ecclestone and Hayes state the demands of an academic's role should not be pathologized as psychologically damaging, the caricature of the lecturer on the therapy couch is less helpful. It risks creating a culture whereby appropriate articulation of the supervision and development needs of tutors becomes silenced by fears of being exposed as unable to cope with the demands of the job. The caricature of diminished and vulnerable tutors presents a risk that those needing appropriate training and development in emotion work could find themselves feigning invincibility, thereby falling into Fineman's 'stress trap' of professionalism (2003), in which professional mystique is to be preserved, regardless of personal cost. As Crossman (2007) points out, the issue is not related to expectations of professional behaviour in which we externalize the emotional content of interactions with students. It is about how we learn to view the significance of emotions and relationships in making professional and ethical decisions about our supportive interactions.

Earwaker's position on the need for a distinction between personal tutoring and the specific professional activity of counselling, seems to argue that academic staff

should not be undertaking work of this nature, which predicates the appropriateness of a professional referral model. This appears to have been accepted by the institutions who increasingly offer counselling, mental health and other professional services via a centralized student support function (Macfarlane, 2007). In following such a model, institutions could perhaps assume they have effectively externalized students' personal and emotional problems out of learning and teaching interactions, thereby removing the need to build in support for tutors who would no longer be engaged in such work. As with any activity involving interaction between human beings, research indicates the situation is not quite so easy to rationalize. Owen (2002) found the professional referral model posed difficulties in that students would probably be deep into explaining their problems before the need for referral became apparent. There can be institutional expectations, however, that those who feel emotionally exhausted from listening to students' problems should work harder at their role boundaries and make more referrals. This may well be true in some cases, but failure to make an appropriate referral often arises out of institutional failure to offer training and development that would enhance tutors' skills in this area. How are tutors to identify where the affective strand of pedagogy ends and 'therapy' begins? We might infer from debates about therapy culture and the role of affective pedagogy that any answer would be widely contested. Whilst heated discussion continues in academic journals, the actual interpretations and experiences of tutors in relation to the ethos and boundaries of their roles remain relatively unexplored.

Some of this activity can potentially be defined as emotion work, or emotional labour, a topic which had been the focus of much theorizing and debate during twentieth century, having attracted renewed interest following the publication of the twentieth anniversary edition of *The Managed Heart* (Hochschild, 2003).

Emotion *work* has been described by Hochschild (2003: xi) as:

one part of a distinctly patterned yet invisible emotional system – a system composed of individual acts of ‘emotion work’, social ‘feeling rules’, and a great variety of exchanges between people in private and public life.

Emotional *labour*, in Hochschild’s terms, considers the exploitation of workers who are required to display certain emotional responses which might not be genuinely felt – known as professional display rules. She looks in particular at the effect of extremes of occupational demand on feeling.

Hochschild’s (2003) conceptualization of emotional labour can be located in what has been described as a ‘post-Goffman’ interest in researching the sociology of emotion, which encompasses the constructivist view that emotional development is constructed by functionalist and cultural considerations (Stearns, 1989). Hochschild (2003) focuses on the centrality of emotion in the delivery and consumption of services, and the negative consequences for service workers (including higher education tutors). In effect, human emotion has become marketized both as a commodity to be delivered to consumers, and as a tool deployed by service workers in managing the emotions of self and others. Hochschild’s position resonates with critical social interactionism (Thomas, 1999) by placing emotion work and emotional labour firmly in the context of the commercialization of human feeling. It could be argued that attempts to externalize the personal tutoring role out of the role of the academic via the proliferation in higher education institutions of counsellors and other ‘helping’ professionals (Macfarlane, 2007) means that students now have to consume the services of other professionals.

Men and women experience emotion work in different ways (Hochschild, 2003). Much of Hochschild’s commentary on gender, status and feeling arises out of her analysis of the work of flight attendants, and is not easily transferred to the higher education workplace. The idea of the ‘protomother’ (Hochschild, 2003: 176) is more easily transferable. She argues that service-users base their demands of female workers on cultural expectations about gender, resulting in an expectation that

females should do the work of nurturing, males being seen as more authoritative would be expected to undertake tasks such as rule enforcement. Hochschild argues that more women than men enter occupations where there is public contact and where their 'motherly capacity to enhance the status and well-being of others' (2003: 182) becomes part of the emotional labour that is utilized and managed by the employing organization. Hochschild claims that women are traditionally more accomplished than men at managing feeling, have put emotional labour on the market more than men have, and are therefore more cognisant of its personal costs. Similarly Leathwood and Hey (2009) refer to literature that suggests women's skills at emotion work are considered natural assets for which professional recognition is not necessary, yet males using the same skills are likely to achieve praise and recognition. Thus the fact that a tutor is skilled at or enjoys emotion work with students can result in exploitive emotional labour because of the manner in which the work is utilized, yet undervalued, by institutions.

Noddings (2003) defines caring as characteristically feminine, a position supported by other researchers and commentators who present evidence that the motivation for service work, and the associated low status and reward structure, is gendered. The status of service work in North American universities has been analysed within Hochschild's emotional labour framework (Bellas, 1999). Teaching and associated 'service' involves helping students to mature intellectually and emotionally, whilst motivating and stimulating student interest; activities described by Bellas (1999: 98) as 'nurturing young minds'. Bellas cites a number of research outcomes that demonstrate how the skills and responsibilities such as nurturing (which require emotional labour) are defined culturally as feminine. They tend not to be valued or rewarded by institutions, even when performed by males. By contrast, activities such as administration and research are defined as masculine (which require technical and management expertise), and these tend to be valued and rewarded more highly. The more research intensive the university, the less value is likely to be placed on teaching skills. Morley's 'pedagogy for empowerment' (1998: 16)

facilitates 'oppressed groups recognizing and overcoming the dominant group's evaluation of them'. She cautions, however, that such issues of oppression and difference 'can be contained and dealt with via the emotional labour of feminist academics, leaving the rest of the academy untouched'. She suggests that feminist educators are predispositioned to nurture and give of themselves, and boundary-setting can seem like 'right-wing individualization', hence her warning that this role can become compartmentalized as emotional labour, separated off from other academic functions. She notes in particular how feminist academics:

Inadvertently fulfill a malestream micropolitical function, containing female distress and gender differences and ensuring they do not disrupt dominant organizational cultures.

(Morley, 1998: 24).

This inadvertent containment of distress is also linked by Morley to the establishment of boundaries and self-care. The result is that feminist educators are often working without the supervision and resources which would be provided in other professions where emotional labour is acknowledged. It also means that workload metrics may overlook this sort of work.

Research conducted with academic staff (Ogbonna and Harris, 2004) has demonstrated that female tutors were more likely than their male counterparts to experience work intensification associated with emotional labour. Emotional labouring is reported in their data as performing according to professional display rules in order to convey the impression of caring. This includes evidence of 'deep acting' which serves as a form of emotional self-control. This form of 'deep acting', described by a minority of the sample, was more commonly experienced by women participants who were more vulnerable to work intensification. Ogbonna and Harris offer this as evidence of gender-based differences in how emotional labour is experienced.

Leathwood and Hey (2009) in a critique of Ecclestone and Hayes' therapy culture (2009) argue that it is not the nature of emotion work but the gendered politics of emotion that is problematic. They argue that any consideration of the positioning of emotion in higher education needs to consider the manner in which discourses about emotion have been used to exercise symbolic power on the grounds of the binary distinction between the rational male identity, and the female identity which is seen as underpinned by emotion. Hayes responded in an article in the *Times Higher Education* (Newman, 2009) stating: 'Most women would be insulted by the Victorian assumption that male reason is too macho for them', but Leathwood and Hey (2009) claim that higher education has historically been culturally dominated by 'unfettered male reason', and any failure to acknowledge this implicitly reproduces the gendered politics of emotion. It is perfectly possible that cultural semantics are at work here. The gendered notion of emotion work in the academy when associated with 'characteristically feminine' (Noddings, 2003) terms such as caring and nurturing has resulted in its low status compared with what is perceived as the more rational (and therefore masculine) activities that require technical and management expertise (Bellas, 1999). Yet debates around affective pedagogy do not seem to embody the same gender associations, and are argued much more from a philosophical perspective. Does affective pedagogy escape the symbolic power dynamic associated with the emotion work label?

There are claims that Hochschild fails to take account of the fact that some individuals may be predisposed to find job satisfaction from job roles that involve emotion. Wharton (1999) found that there were additional variables such as job involvement and job satisfaction that could affect the extent to which emotional exhaustion is reported. Morris and Feldman (1996) purport there are antecedents to emotional labour such as routineness of task, power of role receiver, task variety, form of interaction, and job autonomy. Thus emotional labour does not necessarily result in negative consequences for the service worker. Yet Morley (1998) contends that a propensity to nurture may result in excessive emotional labouring that simply

goes unreported. Forms of emotional expression can be either legitimized or overlooked, depending on the institutional, group or individual context (Stearns and Stearns, 1985; Stearns, 1989; Morris and Feldman, 1996; Fisher and Ashkanasy, 2000). Of particular concern are situations such as those in Ogbonna and Harris's study, in which lecturers describe faking concern or caring as a mechanism for coping with the emotional demands of the role. Certainly there are implications for higher education administration, leadership and staff development which relate to the way in which working environments encourage authenticity (Kreber *et al*, 2007).

In professional contexts that require interpersonal relationships, there are usually universal rules of procedure that define the nature of the role. In the case of teachers and students, the role is relatively complicated and unclear. Teachers need to develop a broad role for the purposes of understanding pedagogical matters, whilst at the same time an emotional link needs to develop in order to facilitate motivation and active participation (Labaree, 2000). All of this needs to be undertaken whilst encouraging the student to become autonomous and independent, and whilst maintaining the professional *persona* of teacher. Labaree links this multi-faceted role to Hochschild's professional display rules in the emotional labouring scenario. Labaree concentrates on the complex role of the teacher-student relationship in terms of professionalism and pedagogy. There is little mention of the surface acting, inauthenticity and emotional dissonance that Hochschild's critics claim characterizes, and therefore makes questionable, her definition of emotional labour. We can perhaps look to Goffman's concept of 'facework' for an alternative reading of the significance of professional display rules. Goffman's concept of 'face' in *Interaction Ritual* (1967) relates to maintenance of the equilibrium of social interaction. There is a particular pattern, or line, taken and acted out by individuals who perform according to the display rules of the social situation (status and context). These patterns serve to express our view of the situation, and of the participants (self included). So when we enter into an interaction we are saying (consciously or unconsciously) what we feel about the person(s) with whom we are

communicating, and also about ourselves. Regardless of whether the communication patterns are wilfully entered into, the other participants will assume this is so and will make their judgements accordingly, a factor which we must take into account (how we are being received). The performance of the tutor and of the student may thus be influenced by expectations of behaviour in the institutional, professional/pedagogical and interpersonal context. Yet the question remains, in the absence of common understandings of the ethos of personal tutoring, what is the expected behaviour that would maintain the equilibrium of the interaction? Concerns should be raised about the extent to which institutions as employers are able to exercise an appropriate duty of care to staff and students when the true extent of emotion work in personal tutorials is not visible.

Professional Development

There is a certain irony in the fact that many university teaching staff are instrumental in preparing students for the professions yet they have historically not been regarded as a professional group themselves (Macfarlane, 2004). In everyday use the terms *profession*; *professional* and *professionalism* carry a multiplicity of meanings, many of which are value-laden (Macdonald, 1995), indeed definitions have been located on a continuum that ranges from claims of occupational status to intrinsic qualities and values. Hoyle and John (1995:1) refer to 'the idea of a profession', drawing on four themes whilst acknowledging that most definitions are contested. The criterion approach denotes a self-governing body with a written code of ethics. A functionalist approach defines a profession as performing a social function central to maintenance and well-being of society, utilizing skills to address non-routine problems within a framework of values and ethics, and embodying prestige leading to a strong voice in shaping public policy. The symbolic idea of professionalism can be applied to those occupations seeking a form of professional status; and finally ideological professionalism makes deliberate attempts to influence policy. Johnson (1972) suggests using just two types: *trait* and *functionalist*

models. In Johnson's broad taxonomy, trait models comprise a list of core professional attributes or 'ideal type' whereas functionalist models focus more on relevance to society as a whole. Central to the functionalist approach is the idea that professionals are able to use a highly specialized form of knowledge which is primarily employed for the good of society rather than self-interest. So where would we place academic staff on the status to values continuum? Many lecturers come to academia as a second career and draw on their former professional identity as their external reference point (Macfarlane, 2004). In such cases it is likely that the value base of that professional reference point will influence the ethos of teaching and supporting students, because of the notion of a professionally bounded relationship with service-users in community practice. So what of those who have come to teach in higher education via a research apprenticeship? Macfarlane notes that the doctorate has been traditionally deemed the passport qualification for teaching in higher education in what he deems the narrow terms of professionalism amongst university teachers.

Professionalism as an ideology is expressed by occupations making claims to professional status in a manner that emphasizes professional autonomy as a means of fulfilling obligations to service-users (Johnson, 1972). Decision-making and judgement are exercised on the basis of extended training to acquire the necessary skills. Such training is underpinned by standards and codes of ethics regulated by autonomous disciplinary procedures. Quicke (1998) suggests there was a mutually beneficial arrangement between state and professions in which professionals provided the means for implementation of government policy in return for a voice in the development of that policy. In the case of public sector professionals, however, this relationship has been mediated by the state, it being responsible for provision of statutory services and for exercising control and surveillance as the employer of public sector professionals (Johnson, 1972; Gleeson and Knights, 2006). It could be argued that this has made public sector professionals more vulnerable than those in the private sector to changes in state ideology. Holroyd (2000: 39)

suggests that public sector professionals have traditionally been able to exercise 'a degree of autonomy, of self-control and of trust' from the client and manager, whilst Eraut (1994) argues that the degree of trust placed by the public in professionals has been eroded during the period since 1980, and this has resulted in increased accountability and monitoring. Although higher education institutions are technically autonomous rather than public sector institutions, funding streams are reliant on successful audit, inspection and evaluation from the QAA on matters such as university title, framework for higher education qualifications and the code of practice for assurance of the quality of academic qualifications.

The implications of the lack of a clear professional position on the extent to which helping students with personal problems falls within or outside the academic role, has implications for the manner in which academics are prepared for personal tutoring. Should staff development activity help tutors to externalize student problems from the personal tutoring interaction by developing skills for appropriate and sensitive onward referral? Alternatively, should tutors be prepared for working with students on their personal problems? Should tutors receive similar training and professional supervision to that received by professional counsellors and social workers? The virtue ethics approach (MacIntyre, 2007) for which ethical competence is the learning objective rather than adherence to rules, must surely be the most appropriate way forward. A rule-based approach would not necessarily rely on academic staff holding a belief that the rules were right, but would rely on staff wishing to display adherence to rules in order to answer the monitoring and audit requirements that accompany such an approach. In the case of personal tutoring, direct surveillance of practice is not possible. Individual tutors can do as they wish in the invisible space of the tutorial room, so there is little prospect of efficacious monitoring in the quantitative sense, even if that were deemed appropriate. Macfarlane (2004) found a dichotomy between use of rules and use of discretion by academic staff. He describes some participants as 'absolutist' in the way they make decisions, being unwilling to deviate from the rules, regardless of circumstances.

Some saw the universal application of rules as a means of ensuring equity and fairness. Confidence in using one's own professional judgement, which Macfarlane describes as the situationist approach, seemed to be linked with length of time in post. Actions were negotiated with students via an approach based on the needs of the individual, and tutors were more inclined to use personal decision-making powers based on professional judgement. Ridley (2006) found a number of new personal tutors were finding themselves overwhelmed by responding to student requests for assistance, whereas more experienced tutors had developed something of a 'professional sixth sense' in developing and articulating appropriate boundaries with students. It is not entirely clear whether the term professional is defined in the trait or functionalist mode. Ridley advocates mentoring and informal networking amongst staff in order to help newer tutors develop personal tutoring skills.

Organizational definitions of mentoring can differ in practice and purpose (Brockbank and McGill, 2006). Functionalist mentoring is a didactic method of transmitting the 'party line' on policy and practice implementation; engagement mentoring serves the same purpose but uses softer, more interpersonal methods; and evolutionary mentoring uses reflective dialogue and self-discovery to enable transformation for the mentee. Brockbank and McGill advocate evolutionary mentoring as the way forward for professional development in higher education, which they prefer to call 'personal development in a professional context'. They refer to Brockbank's previous research in which learners described their learning relationship with mentors as non-directive and non-judgemental, more like a friend or a confidante than an instructor or teacher in the traditional sense. Brockbank and McGill also draw a distinction between formal mentoring such as the allocation of a mentor to a newly appointed member of staff, or to a member of staff who is enrolled on a programme of study within the institution, and more informal mentoring arrangements between experienced and less experienced members of staff which can develop organically over time. They argue that these organic

relationships are often the most effective, and are more likely to be evolutionary in nature. This resonates with Ridley's findings at Brighton University.

So, an evolutionary mentoring approach to the professional development of personal tutors might be an appropriate and effective way forward, underpinned by a virtue ethics approach which seeks ethical competence rather than adherence to rules and regulations. But what are the virtues and ethics of the higher education profession and the personal tutoring role within it? Returning to Johnson's (1972) definition of the professions, individuals exercising autonomous professional judgement would be working according to professional standards and codes of ethics regulated by the professional body. Professional standards and codes of ethics for higher education exist, for example the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) Statement of Underpinning Values, the SEDA Professional Development Framework (SEDA, undated), and the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Professional Standards Framework (HEA, 2006). The standards seem sufficiently broad to allow for what Walker (2006) describes as negotiated application at a local level, but the extent to which they are known and applied throughout higher education institutions is unclear.

In the counselling profession, it is deemed necessary to insist that all professionally accredited counsellors engage in regular professional or clinical supervision. Feltham (2000) notes that counselling clients are entitled to expect their counsellor to behave professionally and ethically. Feltham goes on to highlight the existence of normative professional codes which explicitly prohibit sexual contact, and any form of exploitation such as financial or emotional abuse. It has been argued (Jacobs, 1992: 63) that 'there are some aspects of counselling practice which are so obviously right or wrong', certain 'inviolable' rules which are circumscribed in a code of ethics. These are 'physical contact with sexual connotations'; 'confidentiality'; and 'exploitation'. There are other areas of ethical and professional uncertainty which can be explored through the supervision process, the supervisor acting as mediator

between professional rules and ethics, and actual practice. Feltham (2000) points out that although the supervision process is useful in enabling counsellors to address occasions when they have unknowingly or incompetently acted in an exploitative or abusive manner, it would be difficult to pick up on areas where a counsellor deliberately abuses or exploits a client. So supervision can act as a learning relationship and a means of ensuring safe and ethical practice, but it cannot always guarantee to safeguard against deliberate unethical working. Supervision is also about professional development in relation to effective counselling methods. Feltham (2000: 14) tells us that counselling is not so different from higher education when he states:

...how are clients to be protected against ineffective counselling methods, for example, when our profession is characterised more by conflicting well defended theories and traditions than by a consensual focus on effectiveness?

Easton and Van Laar (1995) and Morley (1998) drew our attention to the fact that counsellors and other professionals listening to other people's problems would have their professional practice supported by professional supervision. The counselling literature does little to reassure us that such supervision is a universal panacea. It does give reassurance that, apart from cases of deliberate abuse, the supervision process is valuable for professional learning and development, and for upholding the most fundamental elements of professional ethics, whatever they may be. Like higher education, however, the more nuanced areas of working with other human beings are areas for debate rather than certainty. Feltham (2000) suggests that professional supervision sits alongside other developments such as research and accreditation as part of a process of professionalization. The lack of a clear definition of terms renders the process problematic because in making a claim for professional status it can be unclear what the occupational group is claiming. Teaching is amongst the occupations which are not highly advanced in the process compared with ancient professions such as medicine and law (Johnson 1972). Eraut (1994) argues that in order to be defined as professional, academics must acquire the

professional skills and knowledge of teaching, and not rely simply on subject knowledge alone.

Nicholls (2001: 136) suggests that the HEA framework for professional development has been imposed without due regard for the facilitation of critical and reflective learning, stating:

As many in higher education already know and understand, self-review, self-regulation and professional autonomy flourish only when there is confidence in academic communities' responsibility to their learners and to their own learning.

There are strong echoes of symbolic professionalism in that members are now renamed as *fellows*, but the kind of standing that would enable important incursions into the policy-making process has not yet been fully achieved, although this is listed as one of the HEA's strategic objectives (HEA, 2008).

It is argued that audit and research have had a detrimental effect on the extent to which academics participate in activities which fall outside bureaucratic or research workload activities (Macfarlane, 2007; Walker, 2006). Despite this, Macfarlane (2004) finds from his own research that higher education lecturers are skilled and prepared for negotiating the types of ethical and professional value dilemmas arising out of the personal tutoring scenario, and that personal tutors are better placed than other professionals to integrate academic and social support for students in difficulty (Macfarlane, 2007). Macfarlane's research participants were drawn from a sample frame described by Macfarlane as 'a range of academics from different national contexts' asked to comment on their understanding of the meaning and importance of the concepts of 'service' and 'academic citizenship'. With the exception of two, all participants accepted that student advising was part of their role (Macfarlane, 2007). It is not clear whether these were academics already predisposed to have an interest in this topic area (Ridley, 2006) but the findings are interesting and significant regardless of Ridley's caveat, because an academic's interest in the area might just as easily arise out of a strong belief that student advising is not within their role remit.

The context in which personal tutoring takes place is likely to be affected by the shift towards managerialism and measurable practice which Nicholls (2001) argues has foregrounded many of the tensions inherent within the professional identity of higher education tutors. Research has found that post-1992 and 'older' universities experience these tensions in different ways (Sotirakou, 2004), further emphasizing possibilities of a lack of common understanding. Macfarlane and Gurlay (2009) seem to suggest that the scenario of a profession defined by values and practices has not emerged. They perceive an emphasis on conformity rather than challenge, a tendency for academic developers to promote universal truths rather than to encourage questioning and criticality. HEA-accredited post-graduate certificates have been designed around competency-based learning outcomes that individuals must demonstrate. As previously stated, the standard descriptors are broad-based, enabling institutions to apply criteria in developing their own accredited qualification. The extent to which there is a tight assessment process that has its foundations in performativity rather than creative professional development, is within the gift of the institution. Likewise the interpretation of the criterion 'developing effective environments and student support and guidance' (HEA, 2006) is often perceived as tutors developing electronic resources and being aware of the professional student services available centrally within institutions (Macfarlane, 2007) rather than an understanding of the purposes and process of personal tutoring and other forms of student support offered by academics. Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) argue that prescribed competencies can be seductive where they co-exist with freedom of delivery. They argue that the competencies which underpin teacher training in higher education are presented with rhetoric of radicalism and liberation, but this is a chimera behind which lies the therapeutic ethos with its focus on vulnerable identities. Barnett (2000: 101) suggests that academics are masters of 'the professional hoodwink' giving the appearance of accepting and conforming to external influences whilst retaining their own professional values and practices. Smith's suggestion (2007) that tutors support students despite institutional policy

imperatives and consequently outside officially recognized workload, would appear to support this view. Gleeson and Knights (2006: 288-9), however, find the tendency to stereotype professionals as strategic 'artful dodgers' potentially ignores the moral and ethical constructions of professional identity. Research which emphasizes the deprofessionalizing tendencies of managerial pressures tends to 'caricature complicit or strategic compliance' whereas it might be preferable to 'reinterpret a view of professional *habitus* grounded in a pedagogic practice and civic action'.

Whilst managerialism renders the present and potentially the future as problematic, the past should not entirely be seen as a 'golden age' (Landman, 1998; Macfarlane, 2004). It has been argued that previous notions of academic freedom were inward-looking and self-referential within disciplinary boundaries, and that academics need to look outside themselves and embrace the external world through research and scholarly activity which is framed by a shared concern with learning and development of the professional self (Nicholls, 2001).

Evans (2008) has developed a hypothesis of professionalism orientation based on Hoyle (1974), and on evidence from empirical studies. She characterizes the 'restricted professional' who bases intuitive, experiential professional practice around a narrow perspective of day-to-day classroom-based activity, and the 'extended professional' who takes a wider, more intellectual approach to practice based on valuing an understanding of theories of pedagogy. Individuals will be located at some point on this continuum, and Evans cites research (Evans, 2000; Evans and Abbott, 1998), which demonstrates that this is the case in higher education settings. Evans developed an ontological model of professional development (2008) which has three key components: intellectual development; attitudinal development; and functional development. Attitudinal development consists of perceptual, evaluative and motivational change, which relate to aspects of the job and performance that people value. So Evans points out that the surface value of how academics *perceive* teaching is underpinned by a more fundamental

value system. It is the underpinning fundamental values that affect the extent to which one is motivated to perform a task well; Evans and Tress (2009) argue that, for their sample, the fundamental values are self-efficacy and self-esteem which is somewhat removed from the more collegial value base of Macfarlane's academic citizenship (2007).

The scholarship of learning and teaching extends to the integration and application of knowledge amongst one's peers (Kreber, 2002). So, have the complexities and challenges of contemporary academia resulted in the form of collegiality that could result in professional development which is embedded in collegial teams? Barnett (2000) is certainly not optimistic, stating that the culture of performativity and managerialism arising out of the policy context is at odds with collegiality. So which will win out in the end? Barnett believes that incoherence and lack of tangible ethos will continue to be the *status quo*, and the role of academics is to address it head on. Personal tutors can be using interpersonal skills to take forward involvement in student identity formation, but there is also potentially a Goffmanesque aspect to this role for both tutors and students. This relates to whether each is performing an identity according to social and institutional expectations.

Developmental models such as professionalism (Evans, 2008) and the 'excellent teacher' (Kreber, 2002) are underpinned by reflection and reflective practice. Crossman (2007) advocates creating spaces for reflection and rethinking teaching and learning practices as a basis for training and professional development planning in higher education. This might help create a change in organizational culture in which practitioners feel more comfortable with using reflective practice as an opportunity to explore their own support needs arising out of emotional labour or emotion work with students. Hawkins and Shohet (2007:3) point out, however, that:

In times of stress it is sometimes easy to keep one's head down, to 'get on with it' and not to take time to reflect. Organizations, teams and individuals can collude

with this attitude for a variety of reasons, including external pressures and internal fears of exposing one's own inadequacies'.

Ecclestone and Hayes (2009: 101) caricature reflection as 'a purely therapeutic model of practice' but this judgement appears to be based more on the pedagogical ethos underpinning the reflective practice than on the process of reflection itself. There are many definitions of reflection and reflective practice in the literature, but there is some agreement that the terms refer to an active, conscious process of developing knowledge through experience. The interest in reflective practice as a tool in the education of professionals began in the 1980s following Schön's 1983 and 1987 publications. Consequently literature searches reveal little related material before this date. An early edited work (Boud *et al*, 1985) is often cited as one of the groundbreaking texts in examining the role of reflection in the workplace learning process. Since Boud *et al* (1985) there has been substantial literature looking at reflection as both a challenge and a tool for pedagogical development (Clegg and Bradley, 2006). Such a substantial body of literature cannot be examined in this thesis (journal searches found over 18,000 references between 1985 and 1990 alone). Much of the literature deals with reflective practice in the professional development of teachers, and there is also a significant literature in the professional areas of nursing and social work. The influence of Schön is evident throughout much of this work, and there is a tendency to focus on developing formulaic constructs for identifying levels of reflection. Day (1993) is critical of the body of work that emerged during the 1980s and early 1990s for its failure to consider the need for reflection to be accompanied by confrontation, and its failure to recognize the role of partnership and collaboration in the process, echoing the critical theoretical position. One possible explanation is that reflective practice began, at this point, to be used as an assessment tool in the education of professionals. In an attempt to apportion learning outcomes and marking criteria to reflective practice, Schön (1987: 168) attempts to codify outcomes despite emphasizing the difficulty in identifying what a student has or has not learned. He describes assessment of outcomes as necessarily 'partial' and 'proximate', and this is unlikely to be concordant with the

increasing emphasis on competency based assessment that was then beginning to emerge in education of professionals (Parker, 1997). It could be argued that attempts to organize outcomes of reflection to demonstrate prescribed learning outcomes, is likely to fetter reflective learning to technical skills and competencies prescribed by professional bodies. Parker (1997) claims that education in the UK in the 1990s was underpinned by government-imposed competencies reinforcing the idea that teaching is the technical mastery of discrete procedures manifested by discrete behaviours.

Kreber and Cranton (2000) categorize three knowledge domains based on Mezirow's theories of reflection (1991). The first, *instructional knowledge*, developed by a process of *content reflection*, describes the actions of the teaching process. This deals with the more technical aspects of planning, teaching methods and strategies, and teaching materials. *Pedagogical knowledge*, developed through *process reflection* considers theories of learning and includes pedagogical and diagnostic knowledge about how to teach within the discipline and for the type of student cohort. The third domain, *curricular knowledge* developed through *premise reflection* concerns matters such as module and programme coherence, programme goals and rationale, and how the module can affect students' knowledge and learning skills. This tripartite model is helpful in highlighting the range of ways in which higher education tutors may engage with reflection. A later paper (Kreber and Castleden, 2009) builds on this model, reporting on research that demonstrates differences in the way academics from different disciplines engage with the three domains of the reflective process. They found that disposition towards critical reflection on approaches that had worked in the past but may no longer be effective, was essential for teaching expertise in today's higher education context. Limited awareness of the goals and purposes of higher education tended to be a barrier to reflection, leading Kreber and Castleden to conclude that disposition to reflect on core beliefs of goals and purpose in an emancipatory learning context is an essential requirement for critical reflection.

Clegg (2000: 466-7) reporting her case study of colleagues enrolled on a diploma in research supervision, found that 'reflective practice in higher education can provide a useful and insightful tool for knowledge production'. Clegg goes on to predict, however, that 'ready-made models of reflective practice [would] emerge as a professional socialization template' and cautions:

...if reflective practice is to mean more than a literary turn it must involve a commitment to practice, which is not reducible to discourse, upon which to reflect.

The fluid postmodern condition in which individuals need to seek out their identity indicates that the goal of reflection becomes the production, rather than the discovery of self (Parker, 1997; Clegg, 2004). This is resonant with Bauman's social commentary (2000, 2005) and chimes with Macfarlane and Gourlay's (2009) concerns about the manner in which reflection is used in the professional development of model higher education tutors.

Despite the existence of literature that critiques the implementation of reflective practice in the higher education workplace, there is evidence which implies a turn away from the notion that the role of the academic developer is to 'fix' the individual teacher to achieve performance that complies with centrally imposed, competency-based outputs (McAlpine, 2006). McAlpine acknowledges she has now come to realize that the rhetoric of peer and collaborative learning has not always been the reality of her interaction with academics. She was struck by a comment from a novice academic who said he would judge the impact of his teaching by the extent to which others in his discipline valued and tried out his pedagogical ideas. This was something of a revelation for McAlpine, who now recommends that academic developers give ownership to the disciplines and act as collaborator, not driver. Similar views on taking a disciplinary perspective are expressed by Rowland (2002); Kreber (2002) and Bamber (2009). Bell (2001) has developed learning communities whereby groups of academics, based on cohort or topic, collaborate on a fixed term learning and teaching project. This collaborative, peer-led model moves

away from the notion of individualization and competition between colleagues, which appear to have so much potential to affect collegial working (Barnett, 2000; Macfarlane, 2007; Trowler, 2008). It is now more than ten years since Boud (1999) produced a well-argued case for peer learning by relocating academic development within localized teams, representing a shift in emphasis from largely centralized provision. Boud's argument centred on a process of enculturation whereby academic development would become located in academic work. He suggests most academic development takes place informally and tacitly via interactions and exchanges with students and colleagues, and as a consequence of working through problems. This localized site is the locus of the development of academic identity, and is more influential than attending a course, the outcomes of which may not be implemented at the local level. This proposition relies on the existence of a collegial view of academic work which would provide the context for *in situ* negotiations and discussions about practice. An ethos of peer and collaborative learning rooted in the disciplines has a great deal of resonance with Macfarlane's academic citizenship (2007) and Trowler's application to higher education of Wenger's communities of practice (Trowler, 2008); the fact that academic developers are increasingly writing from this position hints at the prospect of future development activity that is more engaging for academic staff at team level. Indeed Rowland (2002) argues that academic development cannot be deemed professional development unless academic workers can at least exert some control over it. It should be noted that SEDA has, for some years, argued within its statement of practice values (SEDA, undated) that academic developers should themselves be working within communities of practice.

The prospects for professional development within communities of practice is largely dependent on the possibilities for collegial working. Back-stage collegiality is potentially compromised in contemporary universities. Macfarlane (2005) believes that collegiality has been replaced by a less communal academic life epitomized by larger institutions, the fracturing of disciplines, and the impersonal nature of

relationships with students. Trowler (2008) notes the effects of the built environment on academic community-building and the social processes that occur between academic staff. Temple (2007) found that peer group discussion could be improved by physical features built into campus design, but also comments that the connections between the design and use of space in higher education and the workplace performance of academic staff are not well understood. Trowler (2008), for example, comments that 'under the stage' interactions are highly significant in the informal learning associated with the induction of new academic staff. This has resonance with Goffman's dramaturgical imagery which contrasts formal and informal institutional activity, and also with Wenger's communities of practice, acknowledging the importance of learning communities and the process of socializing new professionals. The Learning Landscapes research project (Neary, *et al*, 2010) revealed that informality or 'corridor conversations' have become the means by which discussions about innovation and experimentation are generated. The research report suggests that such informality can work to the detriment of good communication and planning. The project team recommends the creation of 'new academic spaces' to 'facilitate progressive professional encounters', and to 'generate a greater sense of social engagement, informality and collegiality among staff'.

The manner in which these aspirational 'new academic spaces' are described corresponds with Bauman's theory that we are perpetually seeking a notion of 'community' that is no longer available to us. According to Bauman (2000) the sense of community is experienced affectively as a good thing, a place of safety where there is a mutual sense of acceptance and support. He comments that community has been replaced with ruthlessness and competition which means security, confidence and trust are compromised. This resonates with Macfarlane's (2007) analysis of the decline of collegiality and academic citizenship.

Reisz (2010) notes from his interviews with academics that simply moving to open-plan with the stated intention of fostering a more collegial atmosphere will not work if the institutions and the people who work there are not signed up to a more open and democratic culture, the architecture will not match the cultural reality.

Academics in Ogbonna and Harris's study (2004) spoke of the decline in collegiality and sense of community. This was exemplified by comments about the current situation whereby academics sit in their individual offices, rarely coming into contact with colleagues, compared with more collective and communal activity in the past. Again it is possible to detect the feeling that spatial factors have an influence on the extent to which academic staff are able to meet and discuss or reflect upon workplace experiences. The relationship between the built environment and personal tutoring practice is thus two-fold. The literature gives the impression in the first instance that campus design is linked with the extent to which academic staff engage in informal peer learning or other collegial activity. This might also be linked to opportunities for informal peer support and reflective discussion. Change of use, for example changing a staff common room to be used for another purpose, is increasingly likely, demands on resources having increased owing to massification of higher education (Macfarlane, 2004). This means that the social significance of structure and its relationship to practice is dynamic, not fixed (Trowler, 2008) with the potential that social interaction and collegiality might be affected. So opportunities for learning and supportive peer interactions which might potentially underpin personal tutoring practice have the potential to be transient if they exist at all. The second element of this two-fold relationship is the physical environment in which personal tutoring takes place. Participants in Ogbonna and Harris's study appeared to be largely located in single-occupancy offices which affected the extent of peer interaction, but also gave opportunities for private research work to be undertaken, and for this to be interrupted by students seeking a personal tutorial. It is argued in the literature that the move towards open-plan design will result in more academic staff working at home, therefore limiting their physical presence on campus and their physical proximity to students seeking a

personal tutorial. The shift towards open-plan might also affect the boundaries of the role of personal tutor, as perceived by the student. It might be the case that students seeking a personal tutorial to discuss a personal or private matter, might be less inclined to drop in on a tutor who is located in shared office space. The private meeting rooms of the student services advisor might seem preferable for this type of interaction.

Conclusion and Research Questions

The eclectic nature of the literature considered in this chapter is perhaps indicative of the fact that there is little specific research on the essence of the personal tutorial from the tutor's perspective. Research tells us that for many years tutors report dealing with students' personal problems in individualized interactions (Earwaker, 1992; Easton and Van Laar, 1995; Owen, 2002; Ogbonna and Harris, 2004). The integrated curriculum model seeks to encourage an increase in peer support amongst students (Earwaker, 1992; Thomas, 2006; Laycock, 2009) and we are led to believe from TLRP research (Crozier *et al*, 2008) that post-1992 universities are less likely to offer opportunities for this approach. Literature reveals little consensus about the purpose and ethos of the personal tutorial. Whilst there is a tendency to acknowledge affective pedagogy, a range of views have been expressed about what is legitimately included within this category, and there are discussions around the role of academic staff in supporting students experiencing mental ill health. There seems to be common agreement that some student problems would be better dealt with by specialists, but the point at which this becomes necessary is not clearly defined. Macfarlane (2007) argues that the existence of specialists should not mean the opportunity for students to discuss their problems is externalized from the role of the personal tutor. He has a clear sense of the ethos of personal tutoring and its role in the learning and teaching relationship, and the majority of his research participants shared this position. The extent to which this view is shared by tutors across higher education in the UK is unclear, however. There is speculation (Smith, 2009) that in cases where the role of supporting students with personal problems

has been externalized by institutions to a central student services function, personal tutorials occur as off-stage activities outside acknowledged workloads, because tutors feel a moral and ethical imperative to provide this supportive contact. This has the potential to produce unacknowledged emotion work or emotional labour which can lead to burnout. Macfarlane's concerns (2007) about the conditions of modern higher education suggest that reward and recognition systems need to change if personal tutoring is to become an integral part of the academic's workload, valued at institutional level.

The following questions have been identified from the literature. The research aim will be to illuminate the work of personal tutors by facilitating reflective accounts of their personal tutorials with students. This will be followed by dialogue and discussion to encourage critical analysis and consciousness-raising. The facilitated critical reflection will be designed methodologically (see Chapter 3) to enable honest, transformational, emancipatory discoveries about practice, thereby minimizing the risk of the conformist instrumentalism critiqued in the literature by Clegg (2004) and Macfarlane and Gurlay (2009).

Interventions and Interactions

- What types of problems do students bring to their tutors? Are HE tutors aware of an increase in the volume of students seeking individual tutorials?
- Do tutors recognize the role of peer rather than individual student tutorial models?
- Is there evidence that students seek support via personal tutorials with academic staff in preference to accessing specialist services provided centrally by the university?
- Are tutors experiencing requests for support in relation to students' mental health?
- Do tutors feel appropriately supported and skilled for this area of work?

Professional Development

- Do tutors find that the support work they do with individual students in private is acknowledged and recognized by employing institutions?
- Is there tension between personal tutoring and other aspects of workload such as research?
- Do tutors feel appropriately skilled and supported to work ethically and efficaciously with students who present with complex personal problems?
- What value do tutors place value on reflecting on their personal tutoring practice?
- What are the barriers and drivers for reflection and reflective practice?

Collegiality

- How do tutors perceive the usefulness and availability of physical space and workplace time for sharing with colleagues discussions about personal tutoring practice?
- Are there opportunities to reflect and debate with colleagues in the workplace on the wider political and social implications of the higher education context that might underpin and transform personal tutoring practice?

Ethos of Personal Tutoring

- Is dealing with students' personal problems simply accepted as part of the job, or do tutors have a clear understanding of the sense of purpose, and what falls within and outside the boundaries of their roles?
- If there is a recognized boundary, to what extent is this agreed and maintained collegially by teaching teams?
- What are the reference points used by personal tutors when making decisions about their practice?

Chapter 3 introduces and explains the methodological foundations of the research, which is underpinned by critical ontology and epistemology designed to illuminate and critique the *status quo*. Chapters 3 and 4 (methodology and methods) include an explanation of why this research project will be addressing just one perspective, that of the personal tutor.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The research aim is to illuminate the personal tutoring process and, in doing so, to encourage debate amongst personal tutors about the ethos, values and context of their practice. This lends itself to an emancipatory and discursive methodology which can most appropriately be achieved by the use of qualitative methods. This chapter will outline the ontological and epistemological nature of enquiry that underpinned the qualitative research design, the precise methods of which will be considered in detail in Chapter 4.

I will explain briefly the research instruments that were used:

- Literature Review – an initial literature search was followed by a sequential, iterative process of literature searching that continued throughout the research process as themes emerged from data analysis.
- On-line survey - originally conceived as a pilot designed to stimulate interest in the research topic, but which actually produced useful qualitative data from over 100 participants. Data produced on-line have not been reported in the thesis. They were used to write conference papers that stimulated interest and discussion in the area of study, and helped create a diverse participant sample, but have not been reported in the presentation and analysis of findings.
- Reflective Study – ten participants were selected to produce reflective journals exploring one-to-one interactions with students. Journals were constructed using prompts in a workbook, and were followed by a face-to-face semi-structured interview whereby the reflections were explored in more detail.

Critical Realist Ontology

Critical realism acknowledges the existence of an objectively knowable reality whilst recognizing the significance of cognitive and perceptual influences on how we interpret that reality. I had initially intended to locate my research within the interpretivist paradigm because I saw the project as attempting to give personal tutors a voice, an opportunity to explain how they make meaning from their interactions with students. Engagement with literature encouraged me to re-examine my position. I began to view the personal tutoring scenario through a critical realist lens. I acknowledge the objectively knowable socio-economic, policy and institutional reality within which the personal tutorial is located. I also acknowledge that individual tutors might make their own meaning and interpretation of their interactions with one another and with students. The conditions in which interactions take place, however, are fixed and real. The fact that critical realists look for causal explanations in society differentiates them from interpretivists. I have located the research questions at individual, institutional and socio-economic levels and these contextual differentials are present in the analysis. My use of critical reflective dialogue with participants has been the key to facilitating a process whereby participants have been encouraged to identify causal explanations (at individual, policy or institutional level) for the context in which they experience the personal tutorial process.

Critical Theoretical Epistemology

Research based on critical theory may be judged for its ability to reveal the relations of domination which exist in society, and makes links between *facts* and *values* (May, 2001). The possibility of transformation is crucial to the critical theoretical paradigm, which acknowledges the role of a process of reflexivity in questioning the *status quo* and recognizing the influence of the social context on the constitution of reality. Consequently, the processes of reflection and reflective practice, and the nature of the knowledge produced by these processes, are fundamental to the critical theorist.

Habermas (1987), Mezirow (1990) and Freire (1970) emphasize the role of reflection in enabling individuals to recognize and question the influences of ideological illusions on their ontological position. For Habermas, critical knowledge is conceptualized as knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection. Many on-line survey respondents appeared to consider themselves in need of emancipation from what they described as dominating institutional agendas which affected their personal tutoring practice. A potential weakness of the on-line survey approach was that data collection ended when the respondent pressed 'submit'. There was no opportunity for facilitated critical reflection to explore the potential range of factors that contributed to this state of affairs or to consider alternative responses. Consequently there was a sense in which responses to the on-line survey gave an impression of disaffected personal tutors who tended not to articulate consideration of the wider context within which their experiences were located. This led me to conclude that a study of this nature should not be limited to an electronic survey. Whilst the initial responses to the reflective workbook study similarly articulated the micro context of the tutor-student interaction, this was the starting point for facilitating an exploratory and contextualized critical reflection that would prove revelatory and transformative for most of the participants whilst producing qualitative data for the research project.

Mezirow (1990) is interested in the role of 'habits of expectation' as frames of reference which influence how we interpret our experiences. There are two separate processes, reflection and critical reflection. Reflection may serve to raise awareness of the presuppositions on which we make meaning of experience. Critical reflection involves a critique of these presuppositions, identifying those that are not viable, thereby leading to transformation. Critical reflection, which can take place in the context of a research interview whereby the researcher facilitates the unpacking and questioning of practice, exposes to scrutiny the routine cognitive structures discovered. Goffman (1955) points to the concept of script for creation and

maintenance of the manner in which individual professionals interact with the social world. Lamont (2009) considers the way in which academics utilize script in maintaining a collective definition of standards of excellence in grant peer review panels. Lamont's methodology was interesting and relevant as she was producing data with the aim of exploring how academics reach decisions about practice. Her research was on a much larger scale than mine, involved multiple researchers and included observation of a collective process followed by individual interviews. She found that decision-making was contextual and relational. Routine cognitive structures are rarely questioned to the extent that there is a tendency to take decisions on tacit assumptions based on what appeals to individuals rather than on the basis of explicitly articulated frames of reference. My own research was designed to elicit similar exposition and was successful to the extent that a number of participants expressed surprise at the scale and nature of their routine decision-making in relation to interactions with individual students. It became possible to encourage critical exploration of the internal and external contexts within which decisions were taking place by alerting tutors to their own decision-making.

The literature on professionalism (Hoyle and John, 1995; Evans, 2007) encouraged me to focus on the importance of an individual's autonomous decision-making in the context of the personal tutorial, which has resonance with Goffman's focus on micro-level interactions. Professionalism is constructed around the idea that professionals will draw on collectively agreed codes of practice and ethics in order to make those autonomous decisions, a process similar to Goffman's 'frames'. Goffman (1974) uses the metaphor of two men playing a board game to illustrate the relationship of the frame with social actors. For the two men, the difference between the rules within the frame of chess or checkers is of immense significance, and the decision about which to play will have considerable consequences to the interaction that subsequently unfolds. To a disinterested or uninvolved observer, the nature of the game is insignificant, it will be sufficient for him or her to know that the men are engaged in the frame of a board game. Likewise the personal tutorial should take on

different frames of reference depending on the situated context of the *dramatis personae*. In the case of a non-involved observer, it would be sufficient to know that there was some form of interaction between tutor and student. For the student, for the personal tutor and for other personal tutors, there will be a more specific understanding of the frame within which the meeting is taking place. A frame would differentiate the personal tutorial from, for example, a meeting to discuss the opening times of the campus canteen, thereby clarifying the 'rules' of the interaction. Reality is, of course, considerably more complex than this rather crude example suggests, but nonetheless one might expect a personal tutor to view the interaction within a frame that encloses a professional understanding of the personal tutoring realm. For some participants, even the fact that they were taking professional decisions during and after personal tutorials was revelatory, and contextual factors were rarely considered. Critical reflection had not been taking place, so discoveries made during the face-to-face interview were empowering because they revealed in many cases that tutor agency had been or could have been exercised. It seems possible that higher levels of disaffection expressed in the on-line survey occurred because of the absence of empowering discoveries which help illuminate and recognize the locus of agency and control. Ultimately the research has revealed that we are starting from a fairly low baseline in terms of a staged process towards a frame of understanding.

Radical Research

Schostak and Schostak (2008) define radical research as taking place at the point of conflict or dispute between the way things are done and the way people see the world. I was aware from my own practice and observations of the practice of others that there were different ways of seeing the purpose of personal tutorials. The extent to which there was conflict or dispute about this was unknown to me. Personal tutorials were invisible, and the policy discussion limited. It had somehow evaded the gaze of quality assurance. The literature review found a small number of studies specifically about the personal tutorial, some of which had taken place within a

sample frame of one institution. These studies did not indicate a strong sense of professional ethos or value base from which the activity could be evaluated, the exception being Macfarlane's research (2007) in which the majority of academic participants agreed it was their role to support students.

Radical research consists of creating co-operative engagement with diversity and change (Schostack and Schostack, 2008). Given the lack of a universally understood personal tutoring ethos, it would be difficult to articulate a coherent position or range of positions on the tutor experience. This research seeks to begin the process of articulating the tutor experience, to suggest a way forward for developing a professional voice for personal tutors. The scope of this project does not lend itself to the ultimate purpose of constructing the co-operation needed to develop communities of practice that could engage in dialogue with representatives of other stakeholder groups. In that sense this is not radical research in itself, but is an enquiry that began because of the absence of a radical agenda for personal tutoring practice. It is an essential early step on the way to radical research.

Schostak and Schostak (2008: 35) contrast radical research with 'normal' research which 'focuses upon issues of control, improvement and problem-solving.' This research is not 'normal' in that I am not seeking to identify good and bad practice in order to prescribe quality standards for personal tutoring. This is commensurate with MacIntyre (2007) who rejects the idea of moral imperatives external to 'practice'. Whilst I have sought to find ways of opening the door on the personal tutorial to make this work visible, this is not a mission to facilitate surveillance and conformity. It is an acknowledgement that a key part of the working lives of many academic staff is neglected to the extent that its nature and effects are overlooked both by institutions and communities of academics. Whilst this has perhaps enabled a level of autonomy not enjoyed elsewhere in higher education practice, it also means there is no shared sense of the professional values, ethics and boundaries associated with this hidden practice. Likewise it means the institution and the

profession (whether this is exemplified by a body such as the HEA or a community of practice at programme or institutional level) fail to acknowledge their duty of care to academic staff and students. This research was necessary to facilitate the articulation of what has become essentially a private experience for the tutor, or one that is shared with friends or close colleagues rather than via a professional process. This private or individualized experience resonates with Bauman's notion of the decline of the social state (2010), and with Habermas's therapeutocracy (1987). The day-to-day interactions that take place between tutor and student can be explored using Goffmanesque dramaturgical imagery. If the *dramatis personae* in the personal tutorial are the tutor and the student, and the profession and the institution have back-stage roles, we can begin to consider the potential for power differentials and issues of control and domination of particular groups. Radical research moves away from enquiry designed for the dominating group and seeks to get the perspectives of all stakeholders in order to establish debate and discussion (Schostak and Schostak, 2008: 35). The radical model draws on the importance of a collective that incarnates the powers of the individuals of which it comprises. Applying this model to literature about personal tutorials, there is little sense of a collective purpose or ethos. If personal tutors are to have an equal voice in radical research that illuminates power and control issues, a tutor position on the ethics and value base of the process must be established.

Chapter 2 features concerns from Baker *et al* (2006a) about literature that privileges the student voice, making absolute judgements about tutors on the basis of how students have articulated their experiences. Faced with a situation whereby a tranche of literature which they term 'the empowerment literature' has privileged one stakeholder perspective, there might be an argument for research that gives voice to the perspective of another stakeholder group to help to redress the balance. This could be classified as empowerment of a silent or overlooked group, perhaps 'giving voice to the unheard' from a feminist perspective or standpoint (Delamont, 2002: 129). Blaikie (2007) argues that the idea of 'standpoint' has its origins in the

class theory of Marx and Engels, which would appear to lend itself to my own critical theoretical perspective. Baker *et al* (2006a) found that the 'empowerment literature' overlooks the potential for a more sociologically nuanced approach. Individualized accounts of student experience which are valid as starting points for analysis have been viewed as an end in themselves. I share the concern with ensuring that structural factors are not overlooked. I also draw here on Morley (1998: 16) who advocates that pedagogy is a 'complex interaction of at least three agencies – the teacher, the learner and the knowledge they produce together.' She goes on to state that pedagogy for empowerment involves oppressed groups overcoming the dominant group's evaluation of them. This chimes with Schostak and Schostak's definition of radical research but, as they point out, research should encompass the views of all stakeholders in order to identify and deal with issues of dominance and control.

My choice to focus solely on the tutor experience is not an attempt at using standpoint theory to redress the imbalance in the literature. The aim is to give tutors the opportunity to articulate their own positions on personal tutoring practice. Only when personal tutors are in a position to articulate how and why they practice in the way they do can radical research take place, amongst a range of stakeholders, which identifies issues of dominance and control. Baker *et al*'s literature analysis revealed assumptions that tutors were in control, but these assumptions were based on research from only one perspective, that of the student. My aim is to identify the future potential for balanced radical research by beginning a process whereby the tutor position as stakeholder can be included in debate.

Transformative Reflective Practice

I had always intended that my research would bring about change, and initially I considered that this change would be located largely with the individual practitioner. My ontological and epistemological positions were influenced by my

prior experience as a practitioner and manager of community-based support services, and I was concerned that some higher education practitioners were operating inappropriately in their personal tutorial interactions. In particular I was concerned at the lack of a collectively understood professional boundary to the personal tutor role. Working with the literature themes and themes from the on-line survey, I began to discover that I was overlooking the policy and institutional contexts of the higher education workplace. Thus the locus of control does not lie with the practitioner alone, but is located also in the policy and institutional frameworks within which the personal tutorial takes place. Stanley (1997:2) refers to:

epistemological borderlands, as sites of interface between different knowledges, different knowledge-claims, in which difference is spoken through the conjunction *knowledge/power*.

Stanley's comment was useful in recognizing the range of knowledges and perspectives that exist in the context of student-tutor interactions, and the need to recognize associated pedagogy and power issues when reflecting on practice.

The research aimed to produce data about the lived experience of individual practitioners and also to identify explanations for that experience. These might be located with the individual, but they might also be located structurally at an institutional or socio-economic level. Thus recommendations for change have been informed by my interpretations of the effects of institutional practice contexts, and by individual practitioner interpretations and contextualization of their own positions. Data analysis is mainly inductive, influenced by the grounded theory method which views human beings as active agents rather than passive recipients of their life experiences. Each of my ten participants had been active agents of change in their individual working lives, but recognized through the critical reflective process that further change at institutional and personal levels was possible. Follow-up questionnaires completed by participants several months after the end of the research process indicate the extent to which transformation had taken place. Taking part in facilitated critical reflective practice had, for some, resulted in

personal change and a more critically active engagement with personal tutoring practice. Although the on-line survey captured a wider and more diverse sample, it had failed to capture a sense of active engagement and possibilities of transformation for participants. During the period of data collection I disseminated the findings of the on-line survey at higher education conferences throughout the UK. I frequently received comments suggesting that my work was done, that I had more than enough survey data to write a thesis. The comments were correct; I did have enough data for a thesis. I did not, however, have the right data to answer the research questions I wished to explore. The survey design, which used expandable text boxes, was successful in gathering rich, qualitative data. The absence of critical reflective discourse, however, did not allow for contextualizing, meaning-making or transformation. It captured reactive feelings at a point in time. The additionality offered by data produced from the reflective study is evidence enough that the on-line survey was not the most appropriate instrument for answering the research question.

Chapter 4 will detail how the research methods were designed to produce data consistent with the stated methodological aims, and will detail issues of ethics, researcher reflexivity, and analysis.

Chapter 4: Research Methods

Introduction

The strengths of qualitative research can be found in its ability to demonstrate quality and credibility according to the criteria that have been claimed as appropriate to a qualitative study: *credibility; ethicality; quality writing; and a valuable contribution* (Higgs, 2001; Seale *et al*, 2004). Simplistic statements such as ‘qualitative researchers are prepared to sacrifice scope for detail’ (Silverman, 2005: 9) are unhelpful in this context because they lead to an assumption that scope is defined according to a universally applied prescription. All research has scope, the nature of which needs to be defined and justified by the researcher according to its appropriateness in dealing with the aims of the research. This chapter will outline how the research design has addressed the role of the literature (*scope*); sampling (*scope and credibility*); data production (*scope, credibility and ethicality*); ethics (*credibility and ethicality*); and data analysis (*scope, credibility and valuable contribution*).

The Role of the Literature

Research began with a comprehensive literature search to establish key lines of foundational debate and focus on the ideas or conceptual frameworks that inform the practice of personal tutoring and my own practice as a researcher with an interest in this topic (Schostak, 2002, Steward, 2006). Charmaz (2006:6) reminds us of Glaser and Strauss’s recommendation that literature reviews should be delayed ‘to avoid seeing the world through the lens of extant ideas’. Charmaz, a grounded theorist, points out that the intended purpose of delaying the literature review is to encourage the articulation of the researcher’s own ideas rather than the articulation of the ideas of others, but that not all grounded theorists share this perspective. She suggests treating extant concepts as problematic to the extent that they must earn their way into the research document. She cautions, however, against misinterpreting the notion of delaying the literature review with ‘writing a scanty

one' and also against 'failing to cite the most significant points of convergence and divergence' (2006: 166). This section will outline my sequential approach to literature searching, an iterative process that continued throughout the production of the thesis.

I find an extreme form of inductive reasoning inappropriate. All researchers, as actors and agents in society, are influenced by their own reading and experiences. However strongly one claims to be approaching the data in a manner unfettered by existing knowledge and theory, it is surely impossible to 'un-know' the very factors that aroused interest in the research question. My interest in the topic arose from my own experience of the context surrounding one-to-one work with students, and from observing the manner in which this work was undertaken and described by colleagues. The judgements I made about practice were strongly influenced by my prior experience and professional value base developed whilst working in counselling-related scenarios. Had I approached the research without any further prior engagement with the literature, it is likely I would have overlooked many of the contextual factors of personal tutoring in higher education. My research instruments would have been constructed solely around my pre-existing ideas, and the limits of my probing and questioning would have been areas to which I was sensitized at the time.

My initial engagement with the literature focused on research and practice in counselling supervision, which led me into the area of emotion work and emotional labour. I took up the emotional labour theme because of my interest in critical theory and my engagement with Goffman's dramaturgical imagery, both of which influenced Hochschild's (2003) seminal work, originally published in 1983. My interest in emotional labour led me to Ogbonna and Harris's work on emotional labour amongst UK academics (2004), which led to my initial perception that emotional labour or emotion work is necessarily hard on academics. At this juncture I chose to go more deeply into the literature on emotion work and emotional labour

which took me away from the higher education context. This resulted in data collection instruments which reflected the discourse of emotion work, the significance of which will be discussed in the section on sampling below.

Ezzy (2002) suggests that formally acknowledging one's preconceptions is the best way to deal with them. It is often the discovery of alternative perspectives that enables the researcher to identify his or her preconceptions. I embraced inductive analysis and theory-building in the grounded theory tradition for its ability to challenge received wisdom that has been historically located in history and culture (Ezzy, 2002). Initially I had rather arrogantly assumed that received wisdom was at policy and institutional level, and had overlooked that my own approach was steeped in received wisdom from my own history and culture.

In order to develop a literature review that was as rigorous and comprehensive as possible, I continued to engage with literature throughout the duration of the research. This continued engagement was twofold: the topic of study is a live issue and it was necessary to remain in touch with emerging literature; in addition as themes began to emerge inductively from the data, it was necessary to go back to the literature to locate emerging data themes with extant research in the field. As the project developed, and a form of theoretical sampling took place, so my engagement with the literature widened in response to emerging data themes. Ultimately the relationship between the literature and the data has been symbiotic. The literature has sensitized me to themes in initial coding and thematic analysis, and the data has prompted me to search for literature that would assist with exploring and theorizing themes have emerged inductively from the data. Consequently there has been a constant engagement with literature searching throughout the project, which has been challenging in terms of workload, but this has contributed to a literature chapter that is more effective in communicating the wider social, institutional and individual contexts in which personal tutoring takes place.

A researcher should not enter the research arena without an adequate understanding of the sector of social life under investigation (Blaikie, 2000). Here again the literature played a role in illuminating the range of institutional and pedagogical experiences and perspectives across the UK higher education sector, ensuring knowledge was not restricted to my own experience and interests. I would argue, however, that a researcher should not assume that advance literature searching, no matter how thorough, can offer the adequate understanding advocated by Blaikie. If this could be fully known in advance it seems there would be little point in undertaking the research, and had I relied solely or largely on the literature I discovered before entering the research arena, my research would have been limited and impoverished. Whilst I favour the approach of coding data according to emerging themes for its ability to challenge received wisdom; my ability to notice these themes and to locate them in policy, practice and theoretical contexts was partially grounded in literature and experience, and partially in the data. Inductive reasoning can perhaps more usefully be applied for its strength in ensuring that preconceptions do not narrow or restrict the analysis and subsequent theorizing (Ezzy, 2002). The literature played an important role at the start of the project in helping to shape and determine the research questions, my own ontological and epistemological positions, and the aim of the project in influencing policy, practice or theory (Steward, 2006).

So far I have written about the role of the literature in challenging my own preconceptions, and in beginning to open up the diverse social world of UK higher education. The literature also played an important role in facilitating critical reflective practice. I introduced, as interview prompts, the work of key theorists and researchers who had commented on factors relevant to the personal tutorial. This was intended as a catalyst for discussion to help participants notice aspects of their practice (Mason, 2002) and had the additional function of disseminating knowledge to participants which would perhaps be cascaded amongst their colleagues, thereby helping to stimulate a wider debate. There is evidence from the

follow-up questionnaires that this has taken place to a limited extent. My familiarity with relevant literature was also helpful in establishing that participants were generally unfamiliar with debates about higher education policy and practice, and personal tutoring in particular. This discovery was significant, although unanticipated, and has been taken forward in the analysis and interpretation of data.

Sampling

The relevance of sampling, generalizability and representativeness should not be overlooked in qualitative research (Gobo, 2004). Gobo advises qualitative researchers to consider how they can demonstrate the extent to which sample cases are representative of all members of the population from which they were selected, and whether the sample can be generalized to that population without following statistical logic. He argues that in social research it is the social significance of the sample that matters, rather than the statistical logic. In an approach that echoes grounded theory, Gobo argues it is more appropriate to approach sampling sequentially so that the sampling plan exists in dialogue with discoveries in the field. This, he argues, is the most appropriate route to representativeness when researching the social world. Although I was planning to take an inductive approach to data analysis, influenced by grounded theory, my approach to sampling was initially somewhat out of step with grounded theory. I was right in my belief that a process of self-selection would produce participants who were better motivated to play a meaningful part in the research activity. Initially I used opportunity or convenience sampling as the most effective means of recruiting participants via the on-line survey. I had agreed with my supervisor that I would aim for a sample of ten participants who would take part in the main body of the research – the reflective study. The survey was distributed via email using a link to ‘Survey Monkey’. The survey was designed primarily as a pilot to stimulate interest in the research topic, and to recruit participants from as wide a sample frame as possible. It was designed to give a broad backdrop on the ways in which personal

tutors experience the personal tutorial and the extent to which this is acknowledged and supported by institutions. This would provide material to shape the final research questions. It was also intended to be the means of identifying suitable participants who had demonstrated an interest in the topic and willingness to participate. I piloted an early version of the survey via my professional networks, plus a small number of academics from Moray House School of Education, and used an evaluation of this to refine the final survey design. Whilst I did not intend to operate within a positivist framework of representativeness, the survey was sent to a range of higher institutions via word of mouth, contacts and networks. Quite early in the process it became clear that institutions were reluctant to facilitate a general email to all relevant academic staff in the institution. Consequently my own networks and word of mouth became the key initial distribution network, resulting in offers of participation from academics with backgrounds very similar to my own.

I was faced with a choice – do I wish to undertake a study of people with similar backgrounds to my own, thereby changing the emphasis of the research question and the sample frame, or do I wish to intervene in order to facilitate a wider sample frame? As the responses to the survey continued to attract high levels of participation from lecturers who teach on professionally accredited and community or education-related programmes, I decided to target academics from categories under-represented in the survey. First, I used my own networks to identify key individuals within under-represented disciplines and institutional types who could distribute the survey. I also sent emails to individuals within these disciplines using email addresses from academic departmental websites. Despite considerable effort in distributing the request as widely as possible, participants were not easy to recruit. Eventually I began the research with four participants and, by analysing the data soon after it was produced, I was able to follow Gobo's sequential sampling approach based on discoveries from the early data. If a participant commented on or 'othered' certain categories of academic, I targeted that group in order to introduce that perspective into the sample. Although most participants were approached

purposively, it remained necessary to engage with the selection criteria detailed in the ethics section below in order to ensure appropriateness. The under-represented categories I targeted purposively were:

- Tutors from universities other than post-1992
- Tutors from Russell Group universities
- Research-active academics
- Tutors from science, the humanities, engineering and management
- Oxbridge tutors (because they had received a particular mention in the literature).

The aims of the purposive sampling were largely achieved. I was unable to attract any interest from engineers however, and my scientist participant had to withdraw from the study because of family bereavement, as did a historian from a Russell Group university. I was introduced to an Oxbridge tutor via my professional networks. Unfortunately this potential participant felt he was unlikely to be able to offer anything to the study so chose not to take part. Having aimed for ten participants I was successful in maintaining a total of ten by replacing early withdrawals. In the tradition of theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2002), when potential participants put themselves forward I did not accept their offer of participation if I felt they represented categories that were fully represented within the existing number. Unlike theoretical sampling I did not manage to reach saturation owing to difficulties recruiting engineers, scientists and Oxbridge tutors.

After having spoken or corresponded with each participant prior to interview, and having also presented early findings from the survey at national and international conferences in the UK (see Appendix 7), discoveries were made that might offer explanations for the difficulties in recruiting participants from a wide range of academic disciplines. I had not realized the extent to which my discourse was steeped in the culture of my academic and professional background, and discovered this as the study progressed. So, for example, terms such as 'emotion', 'boundaries',

and 'reflective journal' were culturally strange to some academics, as were the qualitative research process and the notion of duty of care in relation to participants' emotional well-being. I kept reflective memos throughout the period of the research, including the survey, and this has helped me to consider ways in which I might have been able to communicate more effectively with a wider range of academics, particularly engineers and scientists. I recorded a memo about an anecdotal but significant discussion I had with an engineer on a train journey, which I mentioned in interviews with the ten participants in an attempt to stimulate debate about stereotypes. I was *en-route* to a conference where I was scheduled to present a paper on staff development for personal tutors. The paper incorporated the findings of the on-line survey. I was rehearsing the PowerPoint presentation on my laptop and, unbeknown to me, my presentation was being watched by a fellow traveller who was an engineering academic. The engineer engaged me in discussion about my research, declaring it 'a bit too pink and fluffy' for him to relate to. Further discussion ensued, during which he told me about human relationships in the engineering domain which appeared quite pertinent to my research topic, yet the terminology of his discourse was quite different from mine. Another passenger who (again unbeknown to me) was an expert in life coaching, began to show an interest in our discussion and declared his opinion that the engineer was just as 'pink and fluffy' as me, but that the engineer did not wish to be considered so. This was the closest I had come to discussing the topic of my research with an engineer, and exemplified how cultural semantics have the potential to affect engagement with a research topic.

Likewise the scientist who withdrew from the study told me during our selection interview that he was able to identify with the research topic and terminology because he was one of the few people in his department who had come into contact, when studying for a teaching qualification, with terms relating to qualitative research, reflective journals and emotion. He suspected that his scientist colleagues would find it difficult to identify with my discourse. I noted in a reflective memo

that this was a potential explanation for the fact that two other scientists had appeared interested in the study, but had withdrawn their interest upon receiving the information for participants and an exemplar reflective workbook. The Oxbridge tutor who expressed an interest felt that he had little experience to reflect upon in relation to the reflective workbook. I found this unusual given that the Oxbridge collegiate system is frequently cited as the vanguard of the pastoral model of personal tutoring. I had recorded in a memo that one of the ten participants (a historian) sometimes struggled initially with my terminology. I have since considered the possibility that the Oxbridge participant, who was from an academic discipline related to history, felt similarly challenged, and that this contributed to his unwillingness to participate. In future research design I will ensure that research instruments are piloted and evaluated with volunteers from a range of academic disciplines to ensure the instruments are able to facilitate culturally appropriate communication.

It did not prove necessary to recruit purposively according to gender because a reasonably even split was achieved organically. I noted in reflective memos a surprising number of comments from fellow academics based on gender stereotypes. The comments relate to their surprise that I recruited more men than women to the study. The fact that I had not found it problematic to recruit males, and the fact that there was little gender-related data emerging from the interviews, led to my own blind spot. Every time I presented my early findings or my research proposal, I was confronted with a question from the audience about the significance of gender. Initially I overlooked this useful intelligence and I discussed with my supervisor the manner in which I would defend this decision during the viva. As the literature developed, however, I came to realize the socio-economic significance of gender on personal tutoring, and this is taken forward briefly in the analysis. The fact that gender was not emerging inductively from the data should not mean that I overlooked it.

Appendix 2 gives details of the composition of the sample and brief biographical details of participants.

This section began with Gobo's assertion that issues of generalizability and representativeness should not be overlooked. I have argued that my sequential sampling has gone some way to ensuring the social significance of the sampling, emerging as it did in dialogue with data derived from the research field. I have noted ways in which I could have improved the cultural relevance of my communication to recruit an improved theoretical sample. I do not wish to overlook the issue of generalizability, but I wish to draw attention to the fact that this research, by its very nature and purpose, was never intended to be generalizable to all personal tutors in higher education. This is research designed to make a contribution to the development of radical research into the personal tutoring scenario, by opening the office door and discussing what takes place in the private space beyond. Discoveries made about the individual experiences of personal tutors can be disseminated to promote further debate and discussion.

The fact that I chose to locate the sample frame across a number of universities runs the risk of being viewed as an inadequate attempt to seek representativeness in order to claim generalizability, yet there was a clear methodological purpose to this approach. Taking a critical realist position, I believe that individuals' interpretations of their experience are affected by context which is often (but not exclusively) institutionally or experientially based. Initial engagement with the critical higher education literature, professional networks and debates around the topic of emotion work, uncovered a range of institutionally contextualized experiences. It would be unwise to assume that context is an objective set of circumstances that influences social actors. We should instead attempt to examine how context is used by actors themselves as part of how they experience situations (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004). Researching in only one institutional context would make it difficult to identify whether participants are influenced or affected by institutional as opposed to social

or personal factors. Equally it might be difficult to differentiate between individual, professional and institutional discourse and interpretation. In fact one characteristic of the data produced from this study is the tendency for many participants to take a micro-perspective that is located at institutional or sub-institutional level such as department, school, faculty, programme delivery team. Participants' limited engagement with meso (institutional) or macro (socio-economic and political) level factors is striking and confirms my concern that a study based in one or two institutions alone might be inward-facing and become an analysis of an institution rather than the start of a debate amongst the profession.

Data Production

Overview

The purpose of the research methods was to produce tutor accounts of the manner in which they experience the personal tutorial. The aim was to facilitate for each participant the opportunity to explore, through reflection, the nature and outcomes of interactions with five individual students. The exploration would be via semi-structured interview, focusing largely on each participant's experiences of emotion work in the personal tutorial, the nature and volume of individual interactions, and the social, personal, professional and institutional context and infrastructure within which the experience took place.

A study that uses only interviews can be considered a weakness because it represents a collaborative interaction between the researcher and the interviewee so it is limited to the interviewee's singular and individualized story (Rapley: 2004). This type of collaborative interaction is, in fact, an appropriate tool for my purpose, using individual interviews to produce data about the individual experiences of personal tutors. The situated context of the individual interview is problematic however, because data will be contextually limited to participants' views and interpretations of their experiences after the event and in the interview scenario. Rapley suggests this can be overcome by collecting observational data in addition to

interviewing. Lamont (2009) used observation in her study of academics on peer review panels. Lamont had an aim similar to mine – she wanted to ‘open the black box of peer review’. Her presence at panel events could be accommodated ethically and she was able to socialize with panellists during breaks which helped to blur the boundary between researcher and participants. Observation of personal tutorials would be problematic on a number of counts. Assuming access could be achieved (and this would be no simple task owing to ethical issues around sensitivity, confidentiality, and the often unplanned nature of the personal tutorial), the presence of the researcher or the presence of recording equipment would unarguably affect interactions to the extent that they would no longer be authentic interactions between tutor and student.

Having rejected observation, another method was required to overcome the risk of producing data solely based on feelings and perspectives of participants during interview, which would potentially fail to capture feelings and perspectives generated during actual interaction with students. This resonates with Schön’s (1987) distinction between reflection *in* action, where observations can be made and documented by practitioners during or immediately after a critical incident, and reflection *on* action where practitioners can think back on their action in order to make sense of this. My eventual choice was to ask participants to produce reflective journals soon after having taken part in an interaction with a student, which could subsequently be used as the locus of critical reflective exploration in a face-to-face interview.

Goffman’s theories on presentation of self are relevant to these processes in that participants will seek to present the ‘face’ they believe is appropriate or expected. Goffman (1955, 1959) argues that human nature is a non-human construct built from externally sourced moral rules which also determine the nature of the interaction to the extent that both parties will behave according to rules that will maintain the equilibrium of the encounter. The way in which this could have affected my own

presentation of self is discussed later in this chapter. The effect on participant responses will be considered here. It would be impossible to edit the concept of presentation of self out of any human interaction, but more extreme forms of self-censorship conforming to rules of expectation should be taken account of. Lamont (2009) considered this issue in relation to the likelihood that people will censor themselves when articulating boundaries within which they work (boundaries is a key theme of personal tutoring). Lamont argues that people are often unaware that the way in which they describe the world articulates boundaries, and that this is useful because taken-for-granted assumptions might be unacknowledged boundary drivers.

Continuing with the theme of boundaries as articulated by the ten interview participants, I did not explicitly reveal my personal position on boundaries and there is evidence of participants seeking affirmation from me for the position they have taken on boundaries. It could be argued, however, that this was not an issue of 'face' but articulation of genuine confusion arising from lack of professional guidance, and it was not in evidence with all participants. My view on this is that whilst I don't particularly think there was a 'face' issue in relation to the views expressed by participants, I have been sensitive to the possibility when drawing conclusions in the analysis.

Reflective Workbook

It seemed the best way to capture the initial reflective thoughts, feelings and emotions *in action* was to ask participants to produce brief reflective journals to be completed as soon as possible after an interaction with a student. They would be asked to document feelings and perspectives *in situ*, and these would be the basis of subsequent critical reflection during the interviews. I needed to allow for the fact that asking busy practitioners to undertake a reflective process might be obstructive, the potential time and effort required undertaking this task being daunting or overwhelming. I therefore designed and piloted a workbook consisting of a series of

simple prompts for reflection which could be completed using brief reflective statements (see Appendix 3). The workbook was piloted with five volunteers who work as personal tutors in a range of academic institutions and disciplines. This enabled me to establish that the estimated completion time for each of the five required workbook journals would be approximately ten minutes, and I was able to offer this information when discussing potential participation. This went some way towards encouraging those who expressed an interest actually to sign up for the study.

Feedback from the pilot had revealed that the workbook was an effective catalyst for reflection. One important point of clarification resulted in a minor, but important, change to the nature of an 'interaction' as defined in the workbook. Two participants asked whether it would be acceptable to reflect on interactions that had not been face-to-face such as email and telephone conversations. Pilot participants had identified that critical incidents causing them to have emotional or stress reactions to students, or concerns about role boundaries, had taken place via these media. This was a valuable insight and was a precursor to one of the eventual themes to emerge from the data; the role and function of email in student-tutor interactions. I found this feedback from the pilot to be instructive, not simply because a pilot study can identify flaws in the research instruments, but more so because it supports my methodological position. Having decided this would not be a fully collaborative enquiry, I still wished to incorporate those taking part as active participants who would be able to shape the research context and enable me to recognize and take account of the existence of other interpretations of the personal tutoring experience. A more positivist perspective might not have been responsive to such a change.

Delamont (2002) finds that asking participants to write for the researcher is useful as long as the potential participants are literate. Whilst it was reasonable to assume that a higher education practitioner has a good standard of literacy, I was aware that some may not be 'literate' in the art of producing reflective journals. To include

participants who were unable or unwilling to produce such journals would have been an undoubted weakness, but limiting my study to those already experienced or skilled at this process ran the risk of including only those already accustomed to this form of recording, such as those from professional education programmes or social work. I had some inkling that academic staff might have been more widely exposed to the reflective journal process than I was acknowledging, given the HEA Professional Standards Framework which has at its heart the evaluation of practice and commitment to continuing professional development. I was aware from my engagement with academic developers via conference networking, that reflective journals were a key form of assessment for newer entrants to the profession who were working towards HEA fellowship. I was also aware from the literature that some commentators had expressed concern about the use of reflection as a mantra which belies the control and regulation of performativity and policy conformism (Clegg, 2004; Macfarlane and Gourlay, 2009) rather than the genuine professional and personal transformation that underpins my own methodological relationship with reflection as a professional process and a research instrument.

In order to remain true to my critical theoretical position on reflection, I was concerned that the use of prompts in a workbook format should not be seen as encouraging absolutist formulaic 'right' answers. This needed to be balanced with the workbook's function of keeping the recording brief and focused in order to minimize time taken to complete the process. I took care when preparing the pilot workbook that the prompts were phrased to elicit expression of the feelings and thoughts of the participant. I had been concerned that some prompts were phrased as closed questions which could result in brief answers. A closed answer could be entirely appropriate as this would essentially be the commencement of an extended dialogue which would be continued at the face-to-face interview. I could use the workbook answers as starting points to ask for further expansion or clarification. The importance of the workbook was to enable participants to identify contextual and personal significance in their personal tutorials. Volunteers taking part in the

pilot gave extended answers to each of the prompts and used the workbook to begin the process of analysing their interactions. This was also the case for most of the ten participants, although two participants produced extremely brief, descriptive accounts with a few astute observations. Ultimately this proved not to be an issue, because the opportunity for more detailed and contextualized reflection facilitated through dialogue was taken up fully in all cases.

Fewer than half of the participants had previously produced reflective journals on their professional practice, and the mode of submission was variable. Most chose to type and email for ease of sending, using the workbook layout precisely, but two participants submitted rather unregimented hand-written sheets, and one had engaged with the reflective prompts via email dialogue but did not send the completed sheets. Once I got to know each participant through the face-to-face interview I was able to form the judgement that the manner in which the workbooks were completed reflected the individual style and personality of the participant.

Individual Interviews

Heron (1996) considers a number of mechanisms for reflection that can be used to produce forms of knowing. He concentrates on a cyclical process of propositional knowing, practical knowing, experiential knowing and presentational knowing which focuses on individual practitioner experience. Lave and Wenger's models of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991) indicate that practitioner knowledge develops in a more social context. I drew on both cyclical and situated or social frameworks in order to shape facilitated reflection during individual interviews. As an experienced facilitator of reflective practice with students and with community-based professionals, I was able to explore, through critical discourse and dialogue, the personal, social and institutional conditions within which experiences were located. Participants' reflective workbooks were a starting point for discourse and dialogue in individual interviews which were recorded, transcribed and returned to participants for

verification and further reflection, if required. In order to minimize disruption for participants, I booked two hours for each interview, but managed to conduct each within a one and a half hour timeframe. Dialogue with participants prior to commencement of the research had been useful in establishing rapport and trust, particularly in the case of those I had visited in person. The initial visits had enabled an exchange of experiences of working with students in higher education which I believe established that I was a 'safe' person. It also demonstrated that, despite my 'otherness' as researcher, there were many ways in which I was identified as someone with common experience who would understand and could be trusted with the details of participants' experiences. The pre-visit was useful to me in other ways, because it meant that I was familiar with the location and context of the participants' places of work. This familiarity meant that I was in a more relaxed state throughout the interview, because I had not had to experience problems with finding campuses and offices, and I did not have to deal with initial feelings of strangeness. There are similarities with Lamont's (2009) socializing with research participants in order to make herself less of an outsider. I was also able to get a sense of the built environment and social context of the higher education institution, for example some participants had taken me to the coffee room or showed me the campus and facilities, and I was able to see the office in which the personal tutorials, phone calls or email exchanges had taken place, which helped me to develop a stronger sense of the situations in which working lives were experienced.

When designing questions on sensitive topics, there can be benefits in using long questions. Such questions can be designed to provide memory cues, include familiar words, and also give the participant more time to think. This may help to prevent under-reporting of sensitive information which has been suppressed (Lee, 1993). I was able to use scenarios from each participant's initial reflections in order to design long questions with memory cues. This was also invaluable in establishing rapport and demonstrating genuine interest in each participant's accounts of practice. As Rapley (2004) points out, interviewees who feel comfortable will find it easier to talk

to you. Rapley also highlights the difference of opinion regarding interviewer neutrality. Those who advocate neutrality do so on the basis that lack of neutrality will unduly bias and thus contaminate the data. This scientific approach is at odds with my dialogic reflective methodology, thus my approach has more in common with those who advocate that neutrality creates a hierarchical, asymmetrical relationship that objectifies the interviewee.

Advocates of non-neutral interviewing also recommend mutual self-disclosure for the development of a co-operative, engaged relationship. I used an element of self-disclosure in every interview. This technique helped establish warmth and empathy with participants, indicating that it is acceptable to articulate the messy practice scenarios that characterize personal tutorials. The technique was helpful in establishing open and honest discourse, and most of the participants have continued to email me occasionally with news about developments in their working lives. I believe this indicates that I was successful in communicating genuine interest in their experiences.

Possibly as an outcome of my efforts to emphasize similarity, I did not disclose my views when I felt participants were working beyond what I considered to be an appropriate boundary for personal tutoring. This ran the risk of producing false consensus instead of constructive dialogue. I would argue, however, that direct comment might have given the impression that I present myself as an expert with prescribed solutions. In some cases I believe I used skilful communication to raise awareness rather than claim the upper hand. This resulted in the critical reflection process advocated by Habermas whereby individuals may become aware of distorted presuppositions. Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action* (1983, 1987) argues that, as skilful users of speech and language, we can open ourselves to communication exchanges without having previously decided who will learn from whom. I have continued to emphasize my position as facilitator rather than collaborator, but I also acknowledge the conditions of Habermas's 'ideal speech

situation' which can be exemplified as barrier-free communication in which each participant takes account of the other's rights and needs.

One participant appeared, in the reflective workbook and in the interview, to distance himself from the discourse of emotion work and reflective practice. It was interesting to note that when I shared with him the challenges of my work with distressed students, he politely explained that he never experiences such scenarios because it simply doesn't happen to him. He suggested there might be something about my academic discipline or my personal demeanour that encourages students to weep in my office. When I listened to the tape of this interview I was interested to note that I became rather defensive at his attempts to 'other' me, and refuted his suggestions quite strongly. I was pleased that he felt sufficiently safe to highlight our differences, yet I was interested to note my defensiveness in receiving this communication. The fact that this happened with only one participant is perhaps an indication that most chose to take part because they identify with the idea of emotion work. This again points to areas for improvement in participant recruitment techniques in projects that may follow on from this, because I feel the analysis would be much richer with the benefit of more diverse opinion, although I would need to work on my skills at receiving unwelcome messages.

Macfarlane (2004) used vignettes with lecturers to produce data on the topic of ethics of higher education practice. Lee (1993) recommends vignettes for giving the opportunity to discuss norms and beliefs in the context of concrete and detailed situations. Macfarlane's vignettes were useful because data were produced in focus groups where confidentiality issues might have fettered willingness to discuss actual practice. Such a process might have been useful for this research project; however the research was designed to open the door on actual hidden practice to discover the essence of the personal tutorial, in addition to eliciting participants' views on the ethics and value base of their practice. One stage in my ultimate aim of promoting discussion around the topic of personal tutoring might be to borrow

from Macfarlane's technique and convene focus groups with vignettes based on the findings of this research project.

A follow-up questionnaire was conducted via email several months after the interviews had taken place. The questionnaire was brief, to minimize disruption for participants, and was designed to discover the extent to which outcomes articulated in the interviews had been sustained in subsequent practice. Eight out of the ten participants returned the questionnaire.

Ethics

It would be easy simply to quote the ethical guidance of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004) and claim that I have adhered to its principles throughout the research project. Such a cursory, mechanistic approach would be inappropriate for a research project that includes in its themes the duty of care owed by universities to personal tutors and students. Ethics are important to me because I believe in the importance of ethics of professional practice in higher education, and I believe that if ethical issues are not taken into consideration this will affect the quality of the research. So ethical considerations are more meaningful to this project than merely seeking ethical approval.

Intervention into aspects of social life presents the risk that asking what appears to be an innocent question could, in fact, cause upset (Blaikie, 2000). The process of seeking informed consent involves making potential participants aware of all the risks and any other effects that might present themselves now or in the future (Ballinger and Wiles, 2006).

Duty of Care

Zembylas (2007) draws our attention to the fact that qualitative methods and methodologies have the potential to produce emotional upset for both researcher and participant and recommends incorporating strategies for dealing with these

emotions. This guidance is pertinent to my own experiences as a participant in an on-line questionnaire collecting qualitative data of participants' reflections on critical incidents in which they felt they had been victimized by a student. The questionnaire was extremely well constructed in asking questions to facilitate reflection on my experience of this phenomenon, playing to the strengths of the qualitative approach. The effectiveness of this approach was revelatory in enabling me to recall feelings I had suppressed owing to lack of support from the institution where I was working. Coming to this revelation at 10pm on a Sunday evening when I was alone and unsupported was a distressing experience, and is at variance with the ethical guidance of BERA (2004) which requires researchers to recognize that research might be distressing for participants and to take steps to address this. I needed to ensure my research was designed to anticipate and deal with such eventualities, particularly when finalizing the design of the workbook prompts.

The ethical duty of care towards participants is implicit in the nature of my enquiry, and is articulated in my research themes. Byrne-Armstrong (2001: 72) categorises this as a 'feminist perspective based on intersubjectivity, nurturance, particularity and emotion' which she contrasts with the 'authority' or more masculine perspective of 'the universal ethic of justice and rights built on objectivity, detachment and individual autonomy'. The methodological framework within which data production took place involved working intersubjectively on sensitive topics such as emotion work and professional boundaries, with the explicitly stated aim of producing transformatory and emancipatory knowledge. This involved sharing personal thoughts and feelings in private space, so detachment and objectivity were not options. A balanced approach needed to be achieved however, because I had to ensure that the conditions were right for the participant and me to enter the research arena ethically. The methods were participative, but not collaborative. I considered myself responsible for ensuring that this relatively intimate form of data production would be safe and ethical for all participants. Thus there was a sense in which, prior to the research taking place, I found it necessary to

present a more detached face in order to establish boundaries and to make an autonomous assessment of the suitability of applicants to take part.

Whilst acknowledging that taking part in a qualitative research project might be therapeutic for participants, I remained alert to the fact that, despite my own training and experience in counselling and advice work, it would be unethical to allow the research process to become a counselling or advice session. The research would not be taking place within the professional and ethical frameworks of a counselling relationship. Finlay (2003: 115) describes a situation in which she felt irritated by the lack of emotional response from one of her respondents (an occupational therapist) and 'marshalled her therapist skills' in order to induce an emotional response. She acknowledges this was unethical, and cautions that interviewer reflexivity is essential in recognizing and dealing with this potential situation which arises out of the proximity of the qualitative researcher to participants.

Minimizing Risk

The strength of qualitative research in providing understanding and description of participants' personal experience of the phenomenon under investigation encompasses two significant weaknesses. The first is the real possibility of inducing emotional distress in participants, and the second is the potential to cross a real but sometimes indistinct boundary into counselling or therapy, particularly for researchers who have a professional background in these areas. Whilst researcher reflexivity offers some ability to recognize and prevent these potential problems, recognition can often happen after the event (as in Finlay's scenario) so research design needs to be sufficiently robust to minimize these risks, and the researcher needs to be constantly alert and sensitized to these possibilities before and during the research process as well as afterwards.

The first way of addressing these issues in my research design was by a two-way process of participant selection. Those interested in participating received a written briefing explaining the potential of the research for bringing to the fore unresolved thoughts, feelings and emotions arising out of the extent and nature of work with individual students. The briefing also explained the limitations of the research process regarding support for any emotional issues that might arise during participation (Appendix 4). Participants who continued to express an interest took part in an informal dialogue with me in which the research process and potential risks were explained and explored. It had been my intention to conduct this dialogue face-to-face with each potential participant, and seven out of the ten final participants had a face-to-face pre-meeting. The remaining three were briefed and engaged in dialogue via a combination of telephone and email. This initial dialogue offered the opportunity to make a brief assessment of the participant's understanding of the reflective journal process, and also the nature of available support networks should they be required. This allowed us to reach a negotiated conclusion on suitability of participation. This can be linked with the process of informed consent (BERA, 2004), given there is ample opportunity for the participant to be fully informed of the implications of potential harm before deciding whether to participate. Radnor (2002: 34) describes the research process as 'ethics-in-action' and draws on guidelines of informed consent, honesty and openness and right to withdraw (BERA, 2004) as crucial principles. My sense of duty of care and two-way participant selection is constructed within these principles, but had I not been convinced of a potential participant's suitability, and had I not been able to resolve this through negotiation, I would have declined the offer of participation. It could be argued that this is unethical because it over-rides the principle of autonomy. I explain this position by framing it as my duty of care towards myself. If, in my professional judgement, someone wished to take part in order to secure for themselves a form of therapy to deal with unresolved workplace issues, my own well-being would be at risk, and I defend my right to protect my own well-being. My experience of counselling and counselling supervision gives me the appropriate

skills to approach these issues from a professional ethical value base, which makes me a suitable researcher in this type of arena.

None of the participants made me directly aware of any emotional effects or upset caused as a result of the research process. One participant became a little distressed towards the end of the face-to-face interview when talking about feelings of being exploited and unsupported by the employing institution. Had this distress become apparent earlier in the interview I would have used my professional judgement and discussed with her the appropriateness of continuing. Generally, however, although some strong feelings and views were articulated by participants, this was the only overt display of distress. I subsequently discovered that one participant had taken an extended period of sickness absence from work. Whilst I have no way of knowing the extent to which participation in the study contributed to this sickness absence, the participant gave me permission to include a comment she emailed to me after having returned to work and read the transcript of our interview:

Reading the info brought back some strange memories/feelings about how difficult some things were and possibly how some events could have contributed to my absence. However, it was pleasing to note your supportive comments, which in turn have led to [colleagues] and I adopting different strategies for student and staff support.

Given that the experience for this participant resulted in raised awareness of difficult and distressing workplace contexts, the emphasis on this in the information for potential participants seems to have been entirely appropriate, although I did have some concerns that it might have been disproportionate and I continue to be concerned that it might have given an erroneous message that participants were expected to display emotion. Upon reflection I would suggest that the information for participants should always be delivered verbally in the first instance, offering the opportunity for interactive explanation.

Informed Consent

It is the principle of seeking informed consent that distinguishes social researchers from journalists or spies (Ryen, 2004). As stated in the previous section, the informed consent process was conflated with a duty of care. Two participants withdrew before sending reflective journals, owing to the effects on their workload of close family bereavement. Two further participants withdrew early because they became overwhelmed with work pressures and felt they could no longer spare the time. Each withdrawal was eventually replaced with an additional participant as there were sufficient people expressing an interest, but the outcome was not workload-neutral for the research project. Each of the four withdrawals had involved a telephone or face-to-face interview in order to assess suitability and prepare the ground in relation to duty of care. The risk that this investment of my time would prove fruitless had not been anticipated, and can be considered a lesson learned in workload planning. Each of the eventual ten participants who started the reflective workbook process remained with the study, submitting their journals, taking part in an interview and supplying follow-up information. The zero drop-out rate at this point could possibly be seen as evidence that the careful preparation process was effective in ensuring that each participant was fully aware of the extent and nature of participation, and those who chose to withdraw did so early before there had been extensive commitment of time and effort from either researcher or participant.

I am aware that, whilst the process of making visits to potential participants was a robust and useful process, this might also have created a sense of obligation. Most visits involved extensive travel which, in some cases, extended to an 800 mile round trip. I was sensitive to this potential sense of obligation and made strong efforts to communicate that it would be perfectly acceptable not to participate should this seem the most appropriate decision. I cannot be certain of whether any participants

felt obligated to take part, but each made a strong commitment in time and effort. I used Macfarlane's notion of the academic citizen (2007) as a prompt for discussion in the interviews, and this gave the opportunity for me to raise the idea that I thought participants were 'academic citizens' because they were being supportive of the research needs of another academic. This prompted participants to explain why they had chosen or agreed to take part. Some chose to emphasize the benefits to them of taking part, which eventually became a theme in the analysis.

Ethical Approval

After discussion with my supervisor, I identified that my research came into the category of level 2 ethical approval. I made an application to the Research Ethics Committee which was subsequently approved.

Researcher Reflexivity

Having established rapport and familiarity with research participants and their context, my position was shifted away from the role of neutral observer and was more firmly located within the research arena. Blaikie (2007: 193) points out that 'natural scientists can only observe their subject matter, whereas social scientists can converse with theirs'. In conversing with participants, the researcher becomes part of the research context, which emphasizes the importance of Habermas's belief that enquiry can be distorted by the subjectively influenced researcher. Habermas advocated the use of critical reflection alongside interpretive modes of enquiry in the social sciences in order to expose this.

The manner in which the researcher enters the research arena needs to be defended ethically, epistemologically and methodologically (Schostak, 2002). Researcher reflexivity is one way in which a qualitative researcher can acknowledge and monitor his or her own position in the research. Critical self-reflective methodologies range from researchers reporting on their experiences as an insider within the research to those where reflexivity has been used as an attempt to audit

and monitor influence on the research process in order to seek objectivity (Finlay, 2003). If perceptions and experiences are socially, culturally and linguistically produced (Finlay and Gough, 2003), the standpoint and identity of the researcher is embedded as part of the social world being studied thus the researcher cannot be written out of the report (Ezzy, 2002).

Despite having established rapport and commonality with participants, it was important to remember my role as facilitator in the individual interviews. In taking on this role I have clearly stated my position as 'other' rather than co-researcher or collaborator. Lindolf and Grub-Swetnam (1996: 180) describe a classic image of the researcher as one who attempts to take on the perspective of 'other' and seeks to identify and understand the situated rationality of the objects of the research. They suggest that in this scenario the researcher risks becoming a 'chameleon' [who] 'can change demeanor and physical or social distance as the situation demands'. This can be problematic in that by adjusting the nature of participation in order to match the object of study, there is a risk that the researcher's changing self-presentation might become invisible to the analysis. Lindolf and Grub-Swetnam's position appears to advocate a perspective that is more rational and positivist than my own. In this research project the researcher as 'chameleon' is an asset in establishing rapport by emphasizing areas of commonality and by focusing the interview on themes that are of interest and relevance to the participant. My 'otherness' related to the fact that I had entered the arena as researcher, had assumed the role of facilitator of reflective dialogue, and brought with me experience and knowledge in the area of personal tutoring in higher education.

According to Delamont (2002: 92) 'the danger lies in the preconceptions that are implicit, unacknowledged and unexamined'. As a reflexive researcher I attempted to remain alert to the need to ensure that I explicitly acknowledged and retained my role as facilitator with participants. The benefits of familiarity and rapport needed to be counter-balanced with the need to retain the researcher-participant relationship

or risk sliding into a friendly chat with a peer, running the risk of anecdotalism and losing sight of the research objectives. I believe that in most cases the researcher-participant relationship was preserved. There is evidence of this in the data, for example there are occasions when participants seek affirmation from me after having described their practice and, in a slightly different vein, occasions when participants who are experienced researchers give me advice on the research process. Two participants became inappropriately informal on occasions, and the transcripts reveal my intervention in bringing them back to the research scenario. Likewise there were occasions when my own contribution became too informal, and this had to be corrected in order to revert to the role I sought to play. Stroh (2002) emphasizes that the semi-structured interview should take the form of dialogue with a purpose and recalls occasions when his interviewing technique was identified as faulty because his attempts at humour had the effect of silencing participants' train of thought. He describes how the benefits of hindsight helped him refine his technique for future interviews. One of the benefits of theoretical sampling is that each interview can be an improvement on the last provided the interviewer is sufficiently reflexive with the analysis. Reflexivity was an important component in the analysis, as described in the following section.

Data Analysis

Analysis and interpretation are difficult processes and no amount of advice and guidance can substitute the individual researcher's thinking process (Delamont, 2002). A common weakness of qualitative research is that it fails, prior to the collection of data, to address the issue of how data will be analysed (Ezzy, 2002; Radnor, 2002). The nature of the planned analysis will affect the type of data collected, so an early choice needs to be made about whether analysis will work down from an existing theory (deductive), or whether theory will develop upwards from the data (inductive). The strength or weakness of either approach lies in its appropriateness to the research question (Blaikie, 2000; Silverman, 2005, 2006).

In line with my critical realist approach, I felt it was important to challenge received wisdom by avoiding qualitative methods in which data are forced to fit a theory with no consideration of alternative explanations that can offer a new perspective on issues where there is currently silence or taken-for-granted acceptance (Ezzy, 2002; Silverman, 2006). Extreme forms of inductive reasoning, however, in which researchers do not read the literature or develop hypotheses before entering the field run the risk of producing only descriptions of patterns of association which can make explanation and theorizing difficult (Blaikie, 2007). I had been influenced by Baker *et al* (2006a) who called for a more socially nuanced approach to data analysis in research which examines the relationships between tutors and students.

Whilst the socially nuanced perspective sits well with my critical approach, I also found Silverman (2006) useful in helping me to recognize that I should not use officially defined social problems as the starting point for the analysis. By this he means that some researchers can have a tendency to begin with statistics such as crime rates or audit outcomes, and this can lead to a cause and effect scientific analysis. It is important to begin with a clearly defined academic framework for analysis thus enabling qualitative research to do what it is good at, analysing naturally occurring social phenomena and allowing analysis to emerge organically.

I did not feel that grounded theory was entirely suitable, given my prior engagement with literature and my own practice experiences, but I was aware that until I 'opened the office door' on the personal tutorial by reading and discussing participants' reflective journals, I could make no assumptions about the data that was likely to emerge. I borrowed from grounded theory in order to retain a strong element of inductive analysis, and by utilizing the sequentially developed literature searches for assisting with exploring themes as they emerged from the data. In the grounded theory tradition, I sought to develop analysis systematically by identifying causes, conditions, consequences, concepts and the relationship between them. Unlike grounded theory this model was used to develop conclusions rather

than hypotheses for testing, and was used alongside the more deductive approach of applying a theoretical framework.

The importance of a theoretical framework is also emphasized by Maso (2003) who points out that the passion for one's research questions can lead to originality and determination. In the absence of a conceptual theoretical framework and direction, however, passion can lead researchers into the wilderness. In particular Maso cautions that awareness of one's own theoretical framework can help prevent blind spots in relation to data not compatible with that framework. Thus reflexivity, by allowing the self-conscious testing of one's existing beliefs, can lead to new insights. Delamont (2002: 9) advises 'each researcher is her own best data-collection instrument, as long as she is constantly self-conscious about her role, her interactions and her theoretical and empirical material as it accumulates'.

I had originally identified myself with Silverman's definition of 'partisan' researcher. Silverman classifies the partisan as a radical researcher who seeks evidence for a political theory or practice. Initially I approached this research from the perspective of seeking to demonstrate the incidence and effects of emotional labour on personal tutors. I was taking a radical position that put me at arm's length from the higher education institutions and the state policy-making process which I deemed responsible for the emotional labour I believed I would discover. Silverman (2006: 358) states 'the partisan seeks to provide the theoretical and factual resources for a political struggle aimed at transforming the assumptions through which both political and administrative games are played.' Again there is strong resonance with my allegiance to the transformative and consciousness-raising potential of reflective practice advocated by Habermas (1987), Mezirow (1990) and Freire (1970). I will return, however, to Schostak and Schostak's definition of radical research which emphasizes the importance of representing all stakeholder perspectives. Baker *et al* (2006a) criticized research that is partisan in prioritizing the student perspective, and I do not wish to replicate this partisan approach in my own analysis. Being

sensitive to the possibility of being partisan or sitting in judgement, despite having heard only the tutor perspective, has helped me to ensure that claims made of the data remain located as starting points on a trajectory towards wider and more inclusive debate for transformation in this area. Silverman suggests that a good test of a successful non- partisan study is the extent to which the researcher is surprised by the findings. I would not go so far as to say that I found my data surprising, but it would be true to say that I did not find precisely what I expected to find, and there were some themes in the data which I did not expect to find. The fact that the literature review developed sequentially throughout the project in response to emerging data potentially masks the unexpected, so my reflective memos have been important in reminding me where I have been led by emerging findings.

Silverman's third researcher type is the 'state counsellor' who takes the position of producing data to prescribe policy solutions to problems posed by research questions. This poses an interesting debate in relation to my own position as a researcher because, whilst one of the perspectives I have brought to the research question is that of professionalism and professional autonomy for personal tutors, thereby indicating a position that is at arm's length from the state, I also brought with me the notion that higher education institutions as employers have a duty of care towards their staff. There is potential for the analysis to take on an element of state counsellor in this respect, but this is not its primary purpose.

Countering Anecdotalism

Qualitative research offers the flexibility to undertake theoretical or purposive sampling during the course of the study as knowledge develops (Ezzy, 2002; Blaikie, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Silverman, 2006). I was using an inductive approach, whereby emerging themes from earlier interviews were taken forward into future interviews, so I needed a fairly instantaneous means of initial coding. I took the advice of my supervisor and used pen and paper for the initial coding, and then devised a mechanism for recording classifications of sub-codes using a combination of Microsoft Word and Excel (see Appendix 1). I was also influenced by the work of

Arcuri and MacIlwain (cited in Richards, 2009) whose grounded theory study of sexual attraction between psychotherapists and clients is featured on the companion website of Richards (2009). Arcuri and MacIlwain coded by hand rather than computer software because they shared Strauss and Corbin's (1998) view that software would interfere with the organic analysis of the data.

Systematic coding of data does not, in itself, tell the researcher what the data are saying, and the leap from descriptive analysis to interpretation is often challenging (Radnor, 2002). Lofland coined the term *analytic interruptus* which describes a point in qualitative research where the researcher struggles to move the analysis beyond the coding stage (cited in Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz believes this can be overcome by lifting some data categories to the level of concepts by subjecting them to further analytical refinement. Pre-existing theory or experience may be useful in sensitizing researchers to aspects of phenomena being studied (Dey, 2004; Charmaz, 2006), which resonates with Mason (2002) who advocates use of theory to facilitate a process whereby researchers notice aspects of data which might previously have existed as tacit knowledge. If theories are historically and culturally located (Ezzy, 2002) they are likely to incorporate received wisdom. One of the strengths of qualitative research is its usefulness in dealing with institutional situations or problems that do not appear to be explained by existing theories or received wisdom (Mann, 2003). The standpoint underpinning my research question is that received wisdom and existing theories overlook emotion work and associated professional development needs of practitioners, thus I aim to generate new theory which will develop inductively from the data. In aiming to avoid *analytic interruptus*, I found Blaikie (2007: 193) helpful in his assertion that:

By holding firm to interpretive views about the nature of social reality, as existing only in and through the activities of human agents, problems are created for the transitive intransitive distinction and for an understanding of the nature of power.

Relocating my research in the critical theoretical/ critical realist paradigm, I found I was better able to question the *status quo* and recognize the influence of the social

context on the constitution of the lived workplace experience of participants. By remaining true to my position as facilitator I deployed active listening skills to encourage participants to interpret their experiences by helping them to challenge the assumptions on which their beliefs have been built, and recognize personal, social and institutional effects. This meant that the data had already incorporated a shift from description to interpretation, with the added advantage that some of the interpretation was coming from the perspective of the participant.

Seale et al (2004) report that many qualitative researchers have wanted to dismiss as merely 'positivist' concerns about the quality and credibility of qualitative research, but since the 1990s there have been those who have imported validity and reliability concerns into the qualitative domain, and others who have proposed new concepts for dealing with quality and credibility. Silverman suggests triangulation and respondent validation as important tools for the qualitative researcher in countering accusations of anecdotalism (Silverman, 2006).

Comment [MSOffice1]: I changed the wording here as noted during viva

Triangulation is usually defined as use of multiple theories, methods or observers to produce more accurate and comprehensive representation of the object of study, multiple methods being the most common in qualitative research (Silverman, 2006). According to Finlay and Ballinger (2006: 263) triangulation could be considered appropriate to realist research traditions in that it assumes there is a specific, objective truth to validate, and this was an important consideration in deciding whether triangulation would be an appropriate method for my own research. Steward (2006) sought to use triangulation with an expectation that use of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews on the same group of participants would result in complimentary data for analysis. She describes how contradictory participant accounts were produced from the two sets of data which, participants subsequently told her, resulted from the context of data collection (written and oral). This illuminated multiple perspectives and constructions, which Steward now values over utilizing triangulation for confirming themes and veracity of evidence.

Steward's example illustrates the problem with triangulation for its failure to take account of context. My research produces written and oral data, each in separate contexts and with separate purposes and expectations. Triangulation was not helpful as a tool for ensuring quality because, as in Steward's example, the accounts produced were not entirely comparable; in fact they were designed to be different. One particular reason for this in my case is that the three stages of data collection were actually a means for participants to reflect on and discover thoughts and feelings about their practice. This was a process not previously open to them, so new knowledge was being produced throughout their participation. Consequently the initial reflective recording was the beginning of a process of sensitizing to the effects and context of the one-to-one interaction with a student. The face-to-face interview was an opportunity to consider micro and macro factors including: personal; institutional; socio-economic; and pedagogical, as introduced by me as facilitator. The subsequent reading of the transcript provided a further opportunity to reflect on their experiences, and by the time the follow-up questionnaire was completed, the passage of time had given the opportunity to reflect further and perhaps to notice aspects of practice having been sensitized by their participation.

Participant validation, a process whereby respondents are asked to comment on data to check the validity of the researcher's interpretation, has resonance with the ethical issue of respect for participants (BERA, 2004) which moves it beyond the status of a reliability check imported from the quantitative domain, and makes it appropriate for my own research. The process whereby participants will produce their own reflective accounts in-action and will subsequently reflect on these accounts during an interview with the researcher, offers the opportunity to check meaning and interpretation during the interview. Participants were given the opportunity to read the interview transcript in order to reflect on whether they wished to make any changes to their contribution, or whether they wished to challenge any of my comments made during the interview. Participants were sent the transcript by email and were given the opportunity to respond by email.

Primarily any changes related to factual accuracy and spelling of unusual words. There were also comments made in relation to ensuring the data remained anonymous. A number of participants made comments about what they had said, but there were no requests to withdraw or make changes. The comments were more an acknowledgement that they had made discoveries about themselves from having read the transcript. Some of these comments were incorporated as data, with participants' permission.

Chapter 5: Presentation and Analysis of Data

Introduction

This chapter presents themes derived inductively and deductively from the data. Emphasis has been placed on the direct quotation of the narrative data to convey accurately the thoughts and feelings of participants. The coding criteria used for developing the inductive analysis can be found in Appendix 1. The theoretical framework described in the introduction has been used to analyse the data from a critical social interactionist perspective, melding Goffmanesque interactionism with critical social theory influenced by Bauman and Habermas. The analysis also incorporates data from the follow-up questionnaire conducted with participants by email several months after completion of the face-to-face interviews. The questionnaire was designed to discover the extent to which participants' participation in the reflective workbook project had resulted in personal and professional change.

Interventions and Interactions

The fact that participants were largely unaware of debates around models of personal tutoring resulted in a lack of critical awareness about the efficacy of their own mode of working, and of the range of practice models for supporting students. The way in which tutors described their practice indicated that the 'professional model' predominated. Although this was never labelled as such, it was evidenced by the fact that each participant was aware of a centralized student services provision where specialist advisors were available. Most participants were describing their practice in the 'here and now' with little awareness of alternative reference points, which made it difficult to ascertain any perception that increasing numbers of students were presenting with more complex personal difficulties. Comparison with the past provided a useful reference point for some, however, and

tutors who had many years experience of working in higher education spoke about perceived changes in the institutional context. For Phil, thirty years experience had led him to conclude that students were now more willing to approach tutors than they had been in the past:

If they know there is a service then they come and see you to some extent and I think there is, I hope there is, greater awareness and willingness of students to talk about issues that they find are hindering their academic careers in one way or another. We have a special needs committee, before every exam board there is a small group of us that meet to consider people with special needs for some reason or other that might have affected their exam results, and you get some really silly requests, but most of them are quite serious issues that come. Again I suppose that varies from year to year and I am not aware but I suspect there are more than there used to be, because they weren't known about before and people just got on and managed. But I don't think that that was necessarily a good thing ...

Martin remembered a more collegial system for staff and students, with more opportunity for students to support one another as peers, and the presence of a range of staff who would be supportive to students at a college community level:

There was quite a strong welfare system there based around a personal tutor, and also, not all but many of the students were resident in halls of residence. There was a supportive network via the wardens of the halls of residence, so that was quite strong. There was also a medical centre ... that had a nurse, like a matron I think, and I think there was a kind of role taken on there. Also the principal ... was a very supportive person and his deputy principal ... was very supportive. So I think there was a kind of teamwork approach ...

Martin thought this teamwork approach might have been related to the college's Christian ethos, but was aware there had once been a similar collegial approach at his present (secular) institution, whereby students had been supported via a range of college staff and via their own peer support mechanisms:

... on that campus it had a big residential kind of element amongst [students] and that probably had quite a powerful influence on what was going on. When it moved here, I think that it probably became more and more localized, to people from [neighbouring counties] coming to do the course.

The comment about it becoming 'more and more localized' is Martin's way of explaining that most students now travel in each day rather than being part of a residential community, which had resulted in those collegial support mechanisms being lost. Many of Martin's current students were working quite long hours to

fund their university experience and support their families, usually night shifts in the local supermarkets. This had exacerbated the extent of students' difficulties. Martin felt this, along with loss of the residential community, had been a causal factor in students seeking help from him in his role as tutor. Martin's experience concurs with the findings of Crozier *et al* (2008) and the fact that students from 'the post-1992 institution' were more likely to live at home, and were therefore not able to access the peer support mechanisms that arose out of the residential setting. It resonates with research (Holdsworth, 2006) which confirms that more students are living at home, affecting their ability to engage with academic life. So, where Phil perceived increase in student problems over time as the awareness and articulation of problems that had always been there, Martin took the perspective that there has been a change in the social circumstances of students which has led to increased incidence of lifestyle issues affecting the ability to study, and also fewer opportunities for support from peers and at a college level. Martin's perceptions can be analysed using Bauman's articulation of therapeutocracy theory, epitomized by the decline in opportunities for support arising out of social bonds at a community level. Phil believed that complex student problems have always existed, but that the students just found a way of 'getting on with it'. Unlike Martin he does not put this down to a decline in peer or college support mechanisms, but Phil works in a Russell Group university which would be classified as an 'elite institution' (Crozier *et al*, 2008) and is likely to have a largely resident student population with more potential for peer engagement. On the other hand, Phil suggested that the existence of a Mitigating Circumstances Committee has encouraged students to bring their problems to the university in order to seek assistance. He was quite adamant that this was not an indicator of 'therapy culture' (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009). Instead he made comparison between the employer-employee relationship, and the relationship between university and student:

So looking after your employees is part of your responsibility. It is the responsibility of the university, for me and for me as a teacher because although we don't employ these students they are employed in full time education.

For Phil, the role of personal tutor had been optional. He had been aware when he took it on that it included emotional support, and was unaware of any member of staff who over-interpreted that role. He believed that most personal tutors worked as he did. Phil was quite clear that the sorts of problems students were dealing with were rather more serious than the normal rigours of university life:

The number of them who are caring for somebody back home or taking quite major responsibilities for a dying parent or, sibling who is not well or has disabilities, is absolutely stunning. These people are managing a home life from a distance or sometimes trying to do both, and [two students] who have problems were both managing fine for three years and then something happened in their lives. In a sense these people [Ecclestone and Hayes] are right that ordinary services should be able to pick this up, but they won't because students aren't in the ordinary world they are in a university world. If they go and see their GP then they might get referred through there but I think the personal tutoring service can provide something better.

Phil is acknowledging here that students are living within an academic community that is extraneous to the local community, but is not articulating the type of collegiate and peer support structures that Martin described. Phil seemed to favour an individualized personal tutor system and did not take a view on the concept of peer support models. His description of personal tutoring practice, however, indicates a team approach both amongst personal tutors and between personal tutors and other professionals. So whilst there is little sense of a community of students, there is certainly a sense of a community of helpers.

Dylan could see the benefits but was aware, because of issues around peer learning and assessment, that the individualized academic experience sometimes put students in competition with one another:

If we think about communities of practice and groups and...why don't we pay much more attention to that in the student cohort? So I think it's an untapped potential and I think it would be much better ... when it comes down to it, it's about the individual who wants to get the bit of paper [degree certificate]... But I still think it's a great area of potential that we could explore, just developing that whole notion of student communities of practice in that sense.... I just wonder if again it's this dichotomy isn't it? Between the individual and the group, the individual and the community.

Dylan is thinking of developing peer support amongst student cohorts, whereas Martin was referring to friendships that develop because students, not necessarily on the same course, live and eat together. Martin's scenario is much more resonant with Crozier *et al* (2008) who relate opportunities for peer support at 'the elite' and 'the civic' universities to communities developed at halls of residence or in college rather than at course level. There is also resonance here with Wilcox *et al* (2005) who found that social friendships offered students more valued and successful support frameworks than course friendships. This suggests that whilst the curriculum model of personal tutoring might foster student support networks for matters of an academic nature, friendship groups that occur organically outside the course context might be more likely to offer peer support for problems of a non-academic nature. Students who do not live in proximity to other students are more likely to have friendship groups with people in the community who are potentially unfamiliar with the personal challenges of university life, and this brings us back to the role of tutor as mentor in the absence of other reference points.

Although individualized models of support and models of peer support were mentioned in interview prompts, most participants said considerably less on the topic than Dylan, Martin and Phil. A related topic, the issue of students from overseas, was mentioned by Phil, Erica and Will, however. Erica described in her reflective workbook a series of interactions with a foreign student who had a serious medical problem. Erica was particularly concerned that this young woman had been dealing alone with such a difficult problem when she was so far away from home and family. Erica's reflection included analysis in which she questioned whether she had been 'over-empathetic' with this student, and when this was discussed at interview she realized that, having been so moved by the student's situation, she had probably promised more than she could deliver.

Will was also willing to go the extra mile for overseas students:

There are a lot of them who are overseas students, so I cut them a bit of slack in terms of that, in terms of adaptation and everything else.

Phil articulated even more strongly the particular support needs of overseas students:

There are issues here that we need to look at about how we provide care and support to say students from abroad. Because I don't think that we provide quite the right service for them and I am only just beginning to pick that up. As a parent knowing that my child was away in some foreign country I would expect that university to provide some duty of care some form of *in loco parentis* support.

It appears that Phil, along with Erica and Will, see that they have a role in supporting the particular needs of overseas students despite each of their universities having a well-developed international office to which overseas students can be referred for specific support. International offices tend to facilitate social events and networking for overseas students, so these students are probably quite well-connected to peer support networks, yet tutors saw them as particularly in need of individual support as well. Will explained that he would only be seeing overseas students about their academic issues because the international office and the buddying system offered resources for personal issues.

Other participants did not discuss individualized and peer forms of support, but they did articulate the way in which they saw their role as support providers, which gives an indication of the extent to which they see their role extending into personal issues. Although Angela described how she believed strongly in providing personal support, she commented that there had been a change in the culture of students who now felt they could approach tutors with problems in a way she would never have done when she was a student:

I know when I was a student that I would never have gone to anybody to speak to them anyway, but you just sorted it out. It's your problem and you would sort it out, it's not for somebody else to sort out. If you want to do this degree you do it. ... there is an expectation of "I'm owed this". Even things like giving exam results its "oh but I put in mitigating, do I have to repeat the exam?" You know. It's that sort of, well I have given you a reason why I did badly, why do I have to do it again? You just think what world are you living in?

Danielle, Mark and Will all expressed similar views. In some ways there is resonance with Phil's point that in the past students just 'got on with it'.

Some tutors articulated their position by distancing themselves from the positions of others. Anne-Marie and Danielle were both quite clear that there were others in their respective academic departments who avoided any contact with under-achieving students or those who wanted to discuss personal problems. Anne-Marie described what she believed to be the views of some colleagues:

I think there are some people with personalities, who just have an attitude toward students, that it's demeaning in some way, and only want those that are going to succeed academically or get on with things, that comes across cos I've heard some people make comments about students that have been very demeaning and very stereotypical and judgemental, we'd be happy to support somebody who's got cancer but we don't really want to know anyone who's been to prison, that sort of thing, yes these students have got very different needs but they both deserve to be treated individually and supported individually in the best way we can possibly.

Alex sees differences related to the culture of academic discipline:

...and then we have other departments, some of the scientific schools that just don't engage with this sort of thing at all, don't really – it takes a crisis for there to be anything noticeable to do with pastoral liaison or supporting students in distress or in great need. That's my perception ...and not surprisingly within that school [that does engage with student support] are you know the social scientists, social psychologists, social workers, all those kinds of disciplines, and then if we get something like engineering it's not that there's something wrong, but my experience, my anecdotal experience from listening to students, is that they are not set up at all to do, to cope.

Angela expressed a similar view:

And I think that because we are a vocational course we tend to be more giving. I also think that, because we are quite a small sort of school, and we know the students by name ... We only see the students who haven't passed and the others if they wish to see us. But usually they have gone off somewhere drinking, as they are happy. So we see the ones who haven't done that well and we sort of say what are the issues? You do realize that if you don't pass this time then you have a second sit and then that's it then, you have to give them the rules and regulations. We do it personally because that is what we are like in this school.

Dylan, who teaches on a vocational course, finds on the other hand that some colleagues have not moved on from community practice, and treat students in the same way as they would treat community-based clients, which he finds

inappropriate. Mark also finds that his colleagues display what he deems an inappropriately caring culture:

I have heard a lot of tutors [where I work] and elsewhere talk about having to nurse their students through and all that sort of stuff. I can't be bothered, and this sounds really bad right, on a general level I care but really you know I care about what they do in the course and beyond that I don't care. I don't care about their lives. Sounds horrible, I care about my friends, my family and people I know... Well, the culture is you have to be all like kissy, cuddly and caring. You have to put on a show of being all that. Just not HE culture but wider society... Yes, maybe I wouldn't say, at [a] meeting, that I don't really care about my students' lives I only care about what they do on the course. Because I think that everyone would look at me aghast and be like "Oh my God!!" ...it just seems a bit odd to me – a bit narcissistic. Also I think it depends on the discipline. If you are doing something like a counselling course or creative writing course something where you do have to talk about your feelings that might be more difficult. [My subject] is quite functionalist in the way that you can teach it. You can just bang on about evidence. I think there is an association there between the type of discipline and maybe the nature of the interactions. I don't know I've got no evidence for that.

So, although Mark does not really know what happens in the tutorials of the more vocational disciplines, his instinct that they would have a stronger ethos of care is borne out by the views of participants who teach on vocational courses. It would appear that semantics play a big part. Will and Mark, who perhaps articulated most strongly that they are uncomfortable with the discourse of caring, both demonstrated in their reflective accounts and their discussions of practice that they care about their students. Perhaps a distinction could be made here between caring about and caring for students. Phil and Alex, who were particularly keen to point out that they have strong boundaries around their personal tutoring role and make referrals when appropriate, described some quite complex and sustained interactions which might be perceived by others as caring for rather than about students. Both acknowledged that they spent time after work worrying about students they have been working with.

Some of the literature suggests that students recruited via Widening Access/Participation routes should not be stigmatized or stereotyped as particularly needy. The only semblance of a deficit model for a particular category of students was the approach taken by Will, Erica and Phil in relation to overseas students.

Anne-Marie and Danielle were both particularly keen to emphasize that the proliferation of students seeking help does not arise out of a deficit in students entering university via Widening Access/Participation routes, although each articulated this in a different way. Angela pointed out that mature students (who would be classed as a Widening Access/Participation category) are 'more self sufficient and do tend to sort their problems out'. She suggests a wider cultural shift has taken place:

I often wonder whether it is cultural as well. For me certainly there has been a cultural trend of expectation of wanting and saying "I am owed this how are you going to make me get it?".

The literature also suggests that a consumerist culture has resulted in students making instrumentalist demands of tutors and, although Angela's students don't pay fees, there is still a sense of entitlement to very specific, individualized assistance with passing assignments, a phenomenon Angela described as passivity. Similar thoughts were offered by Alex who also finds some students are passive about their engagement with study, demonstrated by demands that the tutor should give very specific assistance. Alex noted that students who had paid fees had a sense of their own power as individual consumers which made it difficult to persuade them to take ownership of their learning. These experiences would seem to suggest that the Rogerian (1980) notion of tutors and students producing knowledge together in a learning process underpinned both by ideas and feelings, is potentially compromised by this level of student passivity, whatever its underlying cause.

The participants' perceptions of the boundaries of the personal tutoring role was sometimes demonstrated by their approach to referring students to appropriate support services. The term 'referral' was used synonymously for 'signposting'. It is important to clarify that 'referral' (in the sense of sending a student to another practitioner) is generally not possible in the case of student services such as disability services, counselling and academic support, because practitioners in these areas tend to require students to refer themselves. That being said, some tutors

might make a call to the student counsellor and hand the phone to the student, or accompany the student to make an enquiry. Alex was the only participant who habitually accompanied students to appointments with student services, and he had a close working relationship with student services colleagues. Alex was skilled at recognizing the need for referral because his training had made him particularly sensitive to the fact that he should not slip into the role of therapist, but should make a referral to the most appropriate helping professional:

In my case a lot of the stuff that I deal with it's about whether or not the counselling service or our dedicated mental health advisor takes over.

Both Phil and Erica had a good opinion of the student support services available at their respective institutions. They had a good knowledge of services available because the student services department was pro-active in promoting what was available:

[I attended a course on personal tutoring] So it was very much that reflective orientation to begin with and then did you know about student counselling service, did you know about these systems of support that are available? And then what's the best way to help you refer students to them. I found that incredibly useful and probably the sort of thing I should do again, because that was five or six years ago (Erica).

The [tutors] get updated on what is going on from the Disability Office and they have been very helpful in running these kinds of training sessions around knowing your boundaries and that kind of thing (Phil).

This influenced their willingness to make referrals:

I wouldn't hesitate to refer students on. I think it's really good, what's there is excellent and I would hope that if we can't necessarily do it ourselves, we can always refer students on (Erica).

Dylan and Anne-Marie expressed reluctance to signpost students to counselling or mental health services, because they had no idea of the nature or quality of the service:

I always just get that impression that these services are there as back-ups or as fallback positions to say that they are there. So I don't know how well these services are used for example, student advisors, student guidance, and you see pictures of people up there but how routinely they are used or how much, what benefits there are, I'm not sure... (Dylan).

They do have short or long term counselling but I know that the number of students referred to counsellors has increased because I spoke to the counsellors last year and they seem to be very low in numbers and don't have enough staff to cater for the needs of the students. And also they keep sending things through about mental health issues in students and what to look for, but then there isn't a response when you do refer (Anne-Marie).

Danielle and Mark commented that they had only discovered what services were available for students via word of mouth. Word of mouth can be useful in that colleagues disseminating the information can perhaps make recommendations or give tips which might encourage others to use the service. As the sole dissemination method, however, is not likely to ensure the information is evenly distributed, if at all. Dylan made a comment that takes this issue on board:

I think part of that role that central service role is to make the services widely known and for the personalities to be widely known as well. But it doesn't seem to be that way.

The nature of the participant sample means it is not possible to check where the communication failure has occurred. Whatever the case, it is clear from the experiences of the ten participants that those who are made aware and take advantage of regular communication and developmental sessions with colleagues in student services departments appear to have the most confidence in making referrals. This resonates with Humphrys' (2005) advocacy of a model of regular dialogue and debate between student representatives, academic staff and student services in order to develop what Habermas (1981) might call achievement of mutual understanding or consensus.

The fact that a personal tutor makes a referral is not necessarily related to the positioning of their boundaries. Three participants, Erica, Phil and Alex, each described their well-developed avenues of referral to centrally-located student services. Yet the type of student problems they dealt with, and the contact they had with the student before and after having made a referral, were at the higher end of the spectrum for this study. All three described quite intense involvement with the effects of long term physical or mental illness. Phil and Alex were particularly

noteworthy for their involvement with relatives of students with whom they were working, and both described how they sometimes found themselves worrying outside working hours about the welfare of students. Making a referral was not necessarily seen as passing the problem over to a professional colleague. In some cases the services of the student services professional are seen as complementary rather than an alternative to the intervention of the academic member of staff. This seems unsurprising given that 'academic staff are in a unique position of trust to build integrated social and academic relationships with students' (Macfarlane, 2007: 137). Therapeutic theories (Habermas, 1987; Criss, 1999) suggest that the proliferation of professionals for helping with personal problems is an indication of the move towards association with unfamiliar others rather than more meaningful engagement with familiar helpers from one's own community. Yet tutors participating in the research noted the tendency for students to seek out the ear of a member of academic staff rather than a student services professional:

We have student support here ... and I do have the contact numbers and the pamphlet and I do give it to them. But they don't always take advantage; you know there is always "Oh I've spoken to you now so I feel better!" (Angela).

Well they certainly have welfare services and counselling services and academic services so they are certainly geared up to dealing with, if you like, problematic issues. But the routine, you know that somebody's – something happens in their family, their mum dies or something tragic. The services are there but people often go to people they know, so they're not going to go straight to student welfare services, because it's a nebulous thing, it's not a known thing (Dylan).

Macfarlane (2007) drew attention to the potential that institutions would narrow the remit of academic staff by providing specialist support for students. The following comments are indicative of a tacit institutional assumption that the 'professional model' of referring students elsewhere means effectively externalizing the pastoral role out of the remit of academic staff:

I think there is a view that some lecturers do too much when they should be referring on. I think there's a view that when the services are there ...but where the actual boundary is, or where the guidance is, what that actually means in reality, does that mean meeting them twice and then if you meet with them a third time you refer them on, what does it mean? (Dylan).

... my head of department, her views are black and white, we have student services, they go to student services, and so...I just wouldn't go there (Danielle).

The issue of time is relevant here, particularly in relation to the notion of 'instant living' (Bauman, 2000). Angela's point that some students don't take up the services to which she directs them because they feel better for having spoken to her and no longer need assistance, resonates with Bauman's description of contemporary notions of time and space. To those who live for the moment, favouring transience over durability, the notion of the long-term is meaningless; instantaneity is the ideal, so the idea of waiting or planning is counter-intuitive. Bauman (2000) relates this transience/durability dichotomy to a decline in the 'learned habits of coping with the business of life' a desire for instant solutions which was not present in previous generations who acknowledged a past and believed in a future.

If students are looking for instant responses to feelings or questions, and waiting for an appointment or using one's own resources or peer support are not viewed as options, it is unlikely that student services will be satisfactory. It is usually the case that a student will need to make an appointment to see a counsellor or advisor. In the case of services which are under-resourced or experiencing very high demand, it could be the case that appointments take a long time to come through, and the waiting time might be considered unreasonable. If Bauman's analysis of modernity is correct, even a short wait to see a member of the student services team is likely to be unacceptable to some students. Academic staff are often easily and instantly accessible. Some have open door policies; others have office hours, but are also accessible at the end of lectures and seminars. In fact a significant number of participants' reflections were classed as 'unplanned' and it was common for tutors to be approached at the end of a lecture.

Two themes may be drawn from this analysis. The first relates to the perceived boundary of the personal tutoring role, and the related issue of signposting or referring students to specialist student services provision. The ambiguity articulated by participants, and the lack of a consistent approach to the boundary

issue were knotty issues for most. The two tutors who were clear about their boundaries were very much the exception. Many participants revealed an awareness of their ambivalence relating to boundary-setting and referrals, and this had affected the confidence and consistency of boundaries and referrals or signposting. Data from the follow-up survey revealed demonstrable change in boundary-setting and referral mechanisms. This was demonstrated by improved trust in student services:

I am now much more clear about the boundaries of my role and I am much happier to refer students on to others because I realise that others can do as good or a better job than me (Dylan).

More conscious of the need to refer students with problems and difficulties to student advisory/counselling. Greater awareness that I can only listen and provide a certain degree of support relating to studies (Erica).

There was also evidence that personal and professional progression and well-being could be improved by taking a more stringent approach to boundary-setting:

I...have to recognise further that I cannot be everything to everybody I have started to look after 'me' more (Anne-Marie).

I have been far better, since last year, at ring-fencing time for my own non-post-related research activities. As well as trying to continue to effectively manage relationship boundaries I have had to be more 'ruthless' when taking research time (Alex).

Martin's experience was an exception in that he had been spending more 'welfare type time' with individual students, which had affected his ability to engage with research and embark on a PhD.

The second theme relates to the cultural change that affects students' willingness to approach tutors about personal problems is clearly apparent. Participants' practice experiences differ from the therapy culture theories of Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) in a number of ways. The problems brought by students to tutors taking part in this study were not always related to the Ecclestone and Hayes caricature of nervousness, shyness or lack of confidence about academic skills, but were problems caused by family or social contexts, by being a student from overseas, and

in some cases by physical or mental ill health. There is work to be done interprofessionally, both within institutions and between professional bodies. It would be helpful if dialogue were to take place in order to determine a practice ethos that determines the roles and responsibilities of the various academic and student services functions, and of the students themselves, in facilitating mechanisms to address problems which may be affecting study.

Mental Health

A number of participants specifically singled out students presenting with mental health problems as a topic for discussion, and did not need to be prompted on this topic. If mental illness were to be defined on a scale from mild, reactive depression or anxiety to diagnosed chronic mental disorder, then eight of the ten participants described being approached for help by a student with problems related to mental illness. This is not a new phenomenon, given the findings of previous studies (Earwaker, 1992; Easton and Van Laar, 1995; Owens, 2002), and given the commentaries of Baker *et al* (2006a); Stanley and Manthorpe (2001); and Connell *et al* (2007). Participants were largely untrained in mental health awareness, and were largely unsupported and unsupervised in this aspect of their work. All were unaware of the claim by Baker *et al* (2006a) that universities have been specifically targeted through government policy as a therapeutic intervention for the mentally ill in society, and were also not familiar with the Universities UK guidance on duty of care around surveillance and monitoring students with mental ill health. This concurs with Stanley and Manthorpe (2001) who found that a significant number of personal tutors were not confident at dealing with mental health problems, and that HEIs were reluctant to take on this role. It is worrying to discover from the experiences of participants, evidence of untrained, unsupported tutors dealing directly with student mental health problems; tutors worrying at home in their own time about the potential outcomes for the students; and tutors feeling unclear about referral processes:

The thing with suicide is that in terms of having a protocol for it is really difficult because it entirely depends on the nature of the disclosure and although you can give some basic advice on what should happen but I can imagine, yeh, I know of situations where that's happened or a colleague just kind of doesn't want to upset the student and damage the relationship so hasn't said anything to the student in terms of "right well I know that we normally speak in confidence but I really have to tell somebody about this", and so has just put a note on the student's file and not said anything to anyone, and perhaps not thought about how dangerous that is as well from a professional point of view (Alex).

I think there is a massive issue around what if a student took their life or died or something happened to them? So I got an email from the student last year in March or April saying that he was looking out at [the cliffs] thinking how beautiful it was. I didn't go and visit the student but I made sure that he was okay the next morning. Because students do throw themselves off [the cliffs]. don't know, again it's the issue of what the boundaries are, and what our responsibilities are, but I would hope that if something dreadful like that happened and there was an investigation, as there would have to be, then the university would be seen to be providing through people like myself and other [personal tutors], a good service and an appropriate care (Phil).

[The student's] emotional state has definitely been affected, and she's self-harming and whether serious attempts at suicide have happened...? But she has told me about some of the things so often we talk about her, well every time we talk about her, but we also start off and end with talking about university and planning for the future, so she offloads and I try to put things into perspective as an outsider (Anne-Marie).

Phil's comments about appropriate care echo Rana's point (2000) that a great deal of emphasis is placed on the visible and tragic stories of students who develop serious mental health problems, yet little recognition is given to the successful background support given by tutors around issues associated with the unfamiliar demands of university life to prevent them from escalating into something more serious. Rana does not detail what she means by background support. Looking at examples from participants' reflective workbook entries, this could refer to Dylan's simple yet effective ability to notice that a student who had recently experienced the death of her mother was attempting to carry on with her assignment submission schedule. Dylan felt he should intervene and suggest a period of extended submission dates in order to help the student deal with bereavement consequences she may not yet have recognized. This one-off skilled intervention appears to have been entirely appropriate and proportionate to the personal tutor role. There is also an example of

work undertaken over a number of months by Martin with a student who was experiencing family disputes about a forthcoming marriage:

It became quite a complex personal situation, which overwhelmed him and he stopped basically, he didn't get his course work in for three of the modules.

Martin's reflective account of this situation revealed a history of support-giving to the extent that some colleagues found this inappropriate. Martin thought that colleagues were possibly being judgemental because the student had failed to engage with the university when things became difficult. Martin's reflective workbook entry revealed his ongoing concern about whether he had handled this situation in the right way in relation to the level of time and support he had given to the student.

Other examples from the reflective workbooks reveal various levels of support for students, including a tutor intervening with a student's landlord, and assistance with feelings associated with marriage breakdown, bereavement, child abuse or serious long-term illness. There were more unusual examples such as a tutor regularly visiting a student who was living in an institution but who wished to continue with university studies, and a tutor acting as intermediary between a student with a serious diagnosed mental illness and members of his family. Suicidal and self-harming students were not unusual in this sample, given that four of the ten participants described situations in which students had presented as suicidal or self-harming. This rate of occurrence should not be generalized from such a small sample, but there is significance in the fact that it takes place at all. Participants' experiences indicate that tutor intervention at an early stage in minor problematic issues has potentially had the effect of preventing escalation into more serious mental health problems, as Rana suggests. Such interventions ranged from guidance on using procedures for extensions and mitigating circumstances policies, to more fundamental hands-on assistance. Of course we shall never be able to discover what the outcomes would have been had these interventions not taken place, and

therefore whether they prevented more serious mental health consequences for the student. The consequences for tutors are more apparent, however:

Certainly I have gone home this year and last year particularly worried about whether a student would be alive the next morning....I think that is quite an issue for us because we are not therapists, we are not counsellors, but you are concerned when a student seems to be losing control and when do I refer this student for psychiatric care? (Phil).

I had experience of a personal tutee who had quite significant mental health problems and who really was kind of almost suicidal at some points, and I felt that became a huge responsibility for me. It almost took over it became very demanding and felt like a huge responsibility and that was before I'd been on this course [about the boundaries of personal tutoring], so that experience, coupled with this course, has taught me a lot about what you can take on yourself and what you have to say – no, this person's got bigger problems than I can help with. I can help up to a point, but then they need to be directed to better sources of information and help and advice (Erica).

Even with training and experience there are still some students who you go home thinking about. Number 3 that I wrote about, because obviously that wasn't my first and not my last interaction with him, and I think about him an awful lot because his situation is really difficult and he's extremely isolated, and I remember another interaction we had and because I'm familiar with the medication he's having to take for his condition, I did have a bit of a cry after I'd seen him, even though that actual interaction wasn't particularly difficult, there was just such a distinct change because it was six weeks into his medication and it was obvious there was a massive change in him because he has [a mental health condition] and a lot of the medication wipes everything out so the person is just functioning they don't experience highs or lows or confusion, it's as if they've been levelled, and yeh, that was awful and that still makes me quite emotional now, so if I feel like that and I'm aware of those feelings, and there is a big element of...I think there's a difference as well and ... you know, a lot of regular academics, how would they know this stuff? (Alex).

He's a new student and it's the first course he had done. But also I was a bit more wary because I was told beforehand that he had mental health problems and they didn't say what. I didn't think that if I said "no" he would go loopy or anything, if I said a cross word to him. However because he had phoned me a lot I sensed that he was a bit needy and so I didn't want to basically say don't ring me on a Sunday as I felt that he might disengage from the course entirely (Mark).

In the afternoon I'm not usually able to do much because I'm quite emotionally drained by it, and I need to stay quite focused and not get...I think that the interaction I wrote up for you when I came out, I was just in one hell of a state, fortunately I had my husband with me and he was really good, he's really good at putting things into perspective ... if I'd been on my own I don't know what I'd have done, I think I'd have had to sit in the car for half an hour to have a cry (Anne-Marie).

These examples indicate how dealing with mental health problems has the potential to instil tremendous amount of pressure and sense of responsibility for tutors. The solitary nature of the experience for the tutor in the process was striking. These tutors rarely had the opportunity to engage with colleagues or a supervisor in cathartic or transformational discourse. Issues of ethical or safer working had not been explicitly addressed in most cases. Three of the participants reported having discussed their work with their respective spouses who acted as unofficial professional supervisors, or support mechanisms, for these difficult scenarios. The implications for confidentiality are self-evident, but the tutors in question did not see this as particularly problematic. They were understandably grateful that their partners had been willing to offer the support which was so badly needed. It is clear that some participants in this research had been undertaking quite complex emotion work or emotional labour (Hochschild, 2003). This concurs with previous research (Earwaker, 1992; Easton and Van Laar, 1995; Owen, 2002; Ogbonna and Harris, 2004) which had reported the broad emotion work or emotional labour issues that tutors had been dealing with. Thus it was not surprising to discover such interactions and interventions, but the nature and extent were considerably more than expected. Whilst a number of interactions have taken place in participants' offices, the evidence of interventions and interactions taking place outside the university context was surprising.

There is evidence of largely untrained and unsupervised work in relation to suicide, self harm and serious diagnosed mental illness, undertaken by well-meaning tutors who have little in the way of resources to determine whether they are doing the right thing. The consequences for the welfare of the tutor are quite clear when one considers the literature on burnout (Brady *et al*, 1985; Wilkins, 1997; Bakker *et al*, 2004; Hawkins and Shohet, 2007). The consequences for both tutor and student in relation to competent and ethical practice can be viewed in relation to literature on counselling supervision (Jacobs, 1992; Feltham, 2000). It would be reasonable to wonder how the institution could be expected to provide support if it is unaware of

this work or its consequences. This risks becoming a cyclical argument, because the operation of a professional supervision process would improve the institution's awareness of the work of the personal tutor. Phil's perspective from over 30 years experience in higher education is that there has been an improvement in preparation for working with mental illness:

I think the more difficult end of that distinction is the extreme end where you have got a student who is severely distressed and you are not sure if they are depressed or suicidal and then what other resources you can draw on is a really crucial one. And the university have been running courses recently about how do you manage that end. Knowing your limitations and knowing how far to go. Knowing what resources you can draw on. So they recently have been running those and I went to one about a year or eighteen months ago. I think the training for personal tutors has improved a lot since I have been doing it. Certainly when I started I think that I went on a course but it was a half day or a day course where people sort of talked at you, and a lot of discussion groups so we weren't just being talked at.

A training course is better than nothing, but cannot really replace the on-going professional supervision that would be appropriate for practitioners who work in the area of mental health.

Baker *et al* (2006b) expressed concern at policy moves which include higher education as a deliberate form of therapeutic intervention for people with mental health problems. Yet the mental health interventions by tutors in this study were not generally known about at institutional level, so it is more likely that they are taking place in a Goffmanesque off-stage scenario as suggested by Smith (2007). Whilst this was viewed by participants as an imperfect situation, it was seen to be so from a personal rather than a policy perspective. Tutors discussed these mental health scenarios within the personal or institutional context, but did not appear to have considered the more critical perspective that they might be quietly ameliorating detrimental effects of wider education and social policy by offering support to individual students in the private space of the personal tutorial. Additionally, if this work is invisible, how can we know the effects on a tutor's workload? What are the resource implications for institutions? What is the effect on tutors' well-being? How can we ensure effective ethical practice? Bauman (2000)

would be likely to argue that this is indicative of the individualization and depoliticization of modern society, issues remaining as individual rather than state issues. Yet there was no sense in which this was recognized by tutors who, by working off-stage, were effectively preventing the nature of their work with students from entering institutional or national policy debates. It must also be recognized, however, that in many cases tutors explained they had taken on this work because they were worried and concerned about students with mental health problems, but lack of training and awareness-raising in the area of mental health meant they lacked the information and experience needed to make effective referrals. Phil in particular noted the need for professional development in the area of disengagement skills, and this is perhaps significant given Bakker *et al*'s (2006) theory that those who feel engagement with emotion work can be predisposed to difficulties detaching from their work. Opportunities for critical reflective practice via professional supervision or collegial interaction would be useful to raise awareness of professional, interpersonal and policy issues associated with this area of activity. Participants' increased consciousness of the boundaries of the personal tutoring role for academic staff, resulting in changed practice for some, demonstrates that opportunities for facilitated reflective dialogue can be helpful in raising awareness of the limitations of the role, and of the need to facilitate intervention from appropriate professionals.

Professional Development

There was general agreement that research is what counts in terms of the outputs of academic staff. There was very little in the way of tracking and recognizing personal tutoring work. There were mechanisms such as appraisal in place to make sure academic staff were kept on track, usually in terms of research outputs, and these monitoring mechanisms could be applied quite instrumentally, as Dylan explains:

The actual formal structures that they have to support the PRP the personal research plans, the formal structures are very formal. It's supposed to be a support structure like a professor looking after you, but it's...so what have you done, what have you achieved, fill in that form and get things done for next week.

Erica's experience was very similar:

We've got an appraisal system – we have an annual appraisal with a senior member of staff so that's an opportunity to talk through your performance really, what you've achieved, usually research, teaching, admin as well... they have started to build in a discussion around your training needs so there's an opportunity for you to talk about your training needs, but it's tagged onto the end a little bit I feel! We've also got mentors but I can't remember the last time I met with my mentor. All the mechanisms are very much strategic, aligning you with the strategic plan of the university rather than you as an individual.

Tutors were aware that the consequence of this emphasis on research overshadowed personal tutoring in terms of recognition and reward systems.

Erica's explanation is indicative of comments from a number of participants:

...at the appraisals it's how many publications have you got, how many grants have you got in there's no how many students have you dealt with, how many personal tutees do you have, how many successful placements have you dealt with. This is very much a system of metrics and measurements, that's what drives things, and there's no metric or measurement of [personal tutoring] so it just doesn't seem to get counted really.

This meant that participants looking for career development or recognition knew what they had to prioritize, as Danielle explains:

it's still this air in academia that your publications are what makes you a proper academic and that student type stuff won't actually get you anywhere

Will felt that it was important to be good enough as a tutor, but that it would be foolish to spend too much time on performance in this area:

We know that students are important, and don't get me wrong, but at the same time as long as you are doing well. You are scoring on target for your evaluations and everything is going okay that is expected, doing much beyond that, well done, but where is your research?

Will was quite nonchalant about this, but Erica stated on many occasions that it made her feel uncomfortable. She considered herself to be quite student-centred, but she knew what she had to do to perform to expectations, as illustrated below:

You get to know what you can do – all the signals are it's research that counts. Everyone knows that for promotion – it's research that counts so if you're going to compromise on anything you're going to compromise on teaching, admin, maybe student contact, those are the things that you can probably, although you maybe shouldn't, those are the things you can get away with.

Generally, tutors who perceived that they spent a lot of time working with students in personal tutorials felt that this work was not recognized at an institutional level. The work was not visible, there were no tangible outcomes so there was no mechanism by which this work could become known to others. For Anne-Marie, this was exemplified by workload calculations:

It's obvious because there's no hours given to you on the timetable for pastoral care and if you take on that role it's up to you, get on with it, you know, but yet if you didn't take on that role and your retention was down then maybe someone would ask the question.

Anne-Marie felt that she had to carry out personal tutorial work in order to retain marginal students, and if she stopped doing this work then she would be reprimanded for the number of student withdrawals that would occur as a result. She had tried to let this be known at an institutional level, but felt it was not noticed, perhaps because it was not a feature of the National Student Survey:

I've tried to illustrate in my annual monitoring report how many withdrawals are linked to the academic process of the course, how many have chosen a different career pathway and how many are linked to personal issues whether I define that as childcare, relationship, ill health that kind of thing. So I try to divide those up. But that never seems to get picked out anywhere. There doesn't seem to be any formal recognition. I think there's recognition within teams, but I don't think there's any formal recognition of the work that people do to retain students. And I don't think the National Student Survey asks that as well. It asks were you given assessments on time, were they explained, where the lecturers on time, there's nothing about – do the lecturers cater for your needs...

Some tutors found solace in the fact that the students, and some colleagues, were aware of their personal tutorial work:

The students know and that counts for a lot ...if I think about colleagues you probably get a feeling because of what students say and general experience. For example a colleague left recently and students were saying oh I'm really sad that she's gone because she was always really helpful and always made time to meet with me and gave me advice on this and that, so you get that feeling about somebody that they're someone that has gone the extra mile or put in the extra effort with students (Erica).

Will, on the other hand, put less value on what the students think, largely because this was not really counted at institutional level:

Your students only notice the benefit, you certainly don't get the benefit because it is soaking up your research time and you are not getting promoted, not getting advancement and you might get kicked out if you don't do your research.

Generally tutors felt they would like to have more recognition for supporting students. Anne-Marie explains how the Vice Chancellor (VC) occasionally enquires about her work. Anne-Marie always says that she is OK, when really this is not the case. She explained why she does this:

I think sometimes because you don't want to make waves and you don't want people coming to investigate you and also you feel like, well if I'm not OK who's not doing their job in this department. Should somebody be looking after me, and will they get into trouble, and I think sometimes there's not a lot of understanding of ...they don't quite know which programmes fit into which, cos I get asked about other programmes – and we're not a big institution and I don't want to sit down and have coffee every day with people but it would be nice just to have someone say – tell me what you do – tell me about your students.

There was a sense in which Anne-Marie believed that the VC's enquiry was mere politeness, and there was no real interest in her response. In fact Anne-Marie had been having real problems with workload and personal tutoring. An honest answer might well have caused the waves she anticipated. She stated during the interview that she was determined not to go through the same workload problems again in the forthcoming academic year, and thought she might well give an honest answer to the VC the next time the enquiry was made.

The fact that the personal tutoring work was not recognized meant that there was no preparation for the role. Dylan commented that his induction and probationary period were 'a joke' and others commented more specifically on the lack of preparation for the role of supporting students. Danielle commented:

Even the handbook for personal tutors, that was literally held up in a staff meeting – you've all got one – it's in your pigeon hole, they've done this now, you've got to see them 20 minutes each term, you can read this but it's a bit rubbish – it wasn't taken seriously at all – here it is blah blah blah but even that the role wasn't taken seriously – we have someone whose role was to set up the personal tutor system and remind staff that you've got to see them every term but it's still down to the individual member of staff.

Erica had similar concerns:

I feel I didn't really get any training ... I feel you do, well not make it up as you go along, but you do sort of develop an understanding of the issues as you go along ... you kind of acquire the knowledge, so there are often these grey areas where you don't necessarily know all the rules and regulations on what a student can do, and we are quite flexible at times, especially where there are health or other issues, so there are occasions when you are in a little bit of a grey area where you are saying well we'll have to see there might be something we can do.

Dylan and Martin both said that there was an assumption they would know how to be a personal tutor, and had similar experiences to Erica in that they were still finding things out as they went along after a number of years in post. The lack of recognition meant that tutors never really knew whether they were doing the right thing, and never got praise for doing a good job with students. Dylan thought this was quite typical of most organizations:

You never get – oh you're doing a good job...I suppose it's like lots of places, you only get a comment if there's a bad thing or a complaint or something.

Erica found this problematic because she had no idea of whether she was valued for doing a good job:

I think that's something that I'm conscious of and it's made me more aware of, that actually you are making decisions you are dealing with situations daily that you don't necessarily always know the outcome of. Obviously there's the student feedback forms on modules, you get that kind of issue feedback there but nobody ever says oh well done ... that can't have been easy, or that must have been difficult, or you did the right thing. There doesn't seem to be any vehicle for that really.

Clearly this would have an impact, not only on staff's awareness of their own competence, but also on whether the institution values the work that they do. Phil's comment sums up these feelings well:

Personally, have I been valued? My colleagues value me a lot, my head of department does ... so I feel supported in that sense, but I think that generally those that have chosen to do more teaching and pastoral work haven't been valued in the same ways as researchers have been.

So, participants perceive their personal tutoring is largely unacknowledged, and therefore unsupported. The implications for professional development and supervision will now be discussed.

The reflective workbook contained a prompt designed to encourage participants to think about skills and judgements they used in their interactions with students – ‘Brief description of interaction with student (including any skills or experience you were able to draw on’. The reflective recordings were subsequently explored more fully in the interview.

Danielle’s workbook entries demonstrated she had consciously used active listening skills to good effect:

Basically I was using my knowledge of the course structure to catch her out (which it did). I used terms such as “it seems to me that you are a bit confused about the content”...I didn’t want to accuse her of lying but I also wanted to make her aware that I wasn’t just ‘buying into’ her story.

Reflected back to them some of the things they had been saying tried to turn it from a negative to a positive.

Danielle explained that she had been taught these skills by a friend who was a trained counsellor. She had turned to her friend because she felt she needed to acquire skills for working effectively and appropriately with an increasing volume of personal tutorial encounters. She had requested professional development at departmental level but this had been refused.

Five of the ten participants explained that the skills they used had been brought to higher education from other contexts. Dylan used active listening skills to good effect, which he attributed to training and experience from a community-based profession:

I suppose because of my practice background I do know when it’s time to refer on, I think. And I also think that I’m aware when small presenting problems could be masking larger problems.

There had been no professional development in active listening skills for personal tutors, so he had worked out for himself how to use these skills in the higher education context.

Anne-Marie made the following notes in her workbook:

I tried to adopt a positive yet 'strict' approach, especially as they were some concerns about the student's use of appropriate research and referencing techniques.

Use of supportive communication – words, gestures and body language.

Anne-Marie's reference to being 'strict' demonstrates her engagement with departmental concerns about referencing skills, but when asked during interview about where she learned the words, gestures and body language of supportive communication, she explained this had been derived from a previous professional role. There had been no wider discussion with colleagues, or advice from the institution, about the appropriateness of communication skills and the boundaries of support.

Angela drew on skills derived from her experience as a health professional:

My experience of working in a hospital where interactions with patients are short lived [...] there is little time to spend with the patient and you have to get them to co-operate. I felt this experience helped in this situation.

She also had her own personal reference points:

...my experiences as a mother.

I calmed her down getting her to separate the emotional issues from the academic load she was experiencing. This is a skill I use on myself in many circumstances where work/home life is pressurized...

When this was explored at interview, Angela had received no specific training for personal tutoring, but there had been a time when a woman (possibly from student counselling) had come to talk to the team about tools and techniques for working with students.

Alex's workbook notes were quite detailed, drawing on his training as a therapist:

...I tried to refocus with practical strategies for being able to get the dissertation completed on time.

I did try to empathize with the student but I was clear that she needed more of a counselling style support – she just wanted to talk things through. I did allow her to do that but I was worried that I was setting a dangerous precedent.

I had to break down the skills into tiny, not just small, steps.

I listened carefully and then suggested some practical tips pertaining to some of the studying issues she was facing.

I then suggested a number of strategies in a very tentative manner as this student has a life-position of I'm not OK – you're not OK and plays the Game 'Poor Me' ritualistically...I then re-engaged in listening and dialled my empathy up a notch so that she really felt listened to, held and received...I specifically drew on my knowledge of TA, my counselling skills and my empathic qualities.

Martin gave similar detail on the skills he used, and the basis on which he made the decision to use them. He was quite clear that he was operating within a practice ethos derived from previous experience and training in a community-based professional context:

The skill/experience drawn upon in the short dialogue was mainly listening and deciding not to respond in any detail. I decided based upon experience to follow up on the feedback later given some time to reflect.

The key skills were communication, reflection and ability to support analysis. ...relationship [skills] and listening/communicating as well as being able to support [student] to clarify and summarize and work through both personal, educational and work issues that were overlain by a messy academic history.

This needed time and patience as skills but also the ability to read non-verbal communication as well as verbal. Experience also said that he needed time to present his own thoughts and not be rushed.

The data reveal that professional development in the area of personal tutoring skills and the boundaries of the role had not been prioritized within the workplace contexts of the ten participants. The reflective workbook activity had encouraged participants to contextualize their practice, but contextualization was largely limited to personal and institutional factors and took little account of wider social or policy issues. This is likely to be linked with the perceived lack of recognition for the personal tutoring role, and lack of opportunity to reflect on practice. It seems bizarre that personal tutoring remains unscrutinized in a higher education professional

context that, as Nicholls (2001) states, is increasingly shifting towards managerialism and competency-based monitoring.

Professional supervision is a professional development mechanism that can address the skills and the support needs of personal tutors. One of the themes that emerged inductively from the data might help to explain why tutors feel unable to request supervision or support, even though they feel they would benefit from it. This may be related to the fact that research takes priority – a view articulated by Erica:

JH: So you'd be unlikely to go to your line manager and say I'm stressed out by the number of students I'm having to see on a personal basis?

E: Yes that's a bit of a no no; it's just 'deal with it' you know, you know what the priorities are.

JH: It's almost seen as a sign of weakness?

E: Absolutely and it's going to get worse I think post RAE they are talking about the new research targets and it's becoming much more individualized, it's becoming much more of a managerial system so I think those pressures there are going to intensify really and I feel saddened by that I feel that the students are increasingly the last in the pile that we're – my mum always asks me – we have a chat about my work, and she says to me – you're a university and the students don't count; effectively they count but you don't really have the capacity to give them as much time and energy as you'd like to or think that you should because at the end of the day what the university is prioritizing really is research.

This idea that a tutor should 'just deal with it' was perceived to be the culture of the higher education workplace by a number of participants. Danielle states:

...I wouldn't say that in my appraisal for example, because that would be the place wouldn't it, you know what courses you want to go on, I wouldn't say that there because I would feel I was somehow, not inadequate but perhaps I was making too much of a meal out of that role and other people aren't doing that – because I know for instance our head of department is very much – you send them to student services.

For Anne-Marie there was a fear that she would be branded as unable to cope with the job, a fear based on previous experience:

I think that there should be a framework and I think something needs to be set up around issues around confidentiality for a start – sometimes there's a concern that if you speak to someone about your emotions, they're going to want to do something, or you feel as if you're not handling things professionally... so depending on how that's taken up and who it is and what their understanding is, then that can lead to having a knock-on effect of you being referred. I just feel I wouldn't want to offload

to my line manager because I wouldn't feel personally safe, and I don't mean that about my physical safety, it's my emotional safety. I don't feel safe in doing that because I don't trust him enough with my emotions. I've had a situation in the past where I was...I think it was just an outlet of stress and I did break down and I found myself being referred to HR for an interview, possibly occupational health, I'd want to think if I was going to offload it would be in the context of a professional type supervision rather than – oh well you're not coping very well.

Danielle had also had a bad experience with her line manager. She explained the situation that led to her feeling in need of support:

There was one particular incident that happened last year where a student was very very upset and it was more extreme but it was similar to something that had happened to me in my personal life a number of years ago, but I was really shaken by it and wasn't sure what advice to give her at the time so went to the head of department just to check what I was doing was appropriate in these circumstances because she wouldn't be able to get a doctor's note but there was going to be press release about this incident. And the head of department laughed, thought it was hilarious, and I was really upset by that, but I think I was – it hit a raw nerve with me because it was something that had happened to me. This poor girl's life had just disintegrated because of something that had happened to her and I was just really appalled but felt there was nowhere to go with that. I know when I got home that night I walked through the door and my partner said – what's the matter with you? He could see it in my face.

Will, too, was concerned about 'admitting probably a degree of vulnerability and a need for help', and stated the he would not trust the staff counselling service.

It has been noted in the literature (Brady, *et al*, 1985; Ogbonna and Harris, 2004; Hawkins and Shohet, 2007) that the act of giving support to another can leave a practitioner feeling that their needs have been overlooked. Yet participants explained they were so concerned about appearing vulnerable or in need of help that they did not request the support they needed. This is an example of Fineman's notion of the 'stress trap' of professionalism (2003), whereby practitioners feign invincibility to preserve a professional 'face'. This is also an example of Hochschild's professional display rules of emotional labour (2003).

The consequences of the 'stress trap' of invincibility had ramifications of a different kind in a situation described by Alex:

colleagues who do things like such as if the student expresses a desire to commit suicide who then don't ... they keep that to themselves either from what I would call a misguided sense of self and somehow they are the ideal person to help this student deal with that or because they feel that it would be a weakness to go to another colleague or a line manager and say look one of my students has disclosed this to me and I'm really concerned ... I know of situations where that's happened or a colleague just kind of doesn't want to upset the student and damage the relationship so hasn't said anything to the student in terms of "right well I know that we normally speak in confidence but I really have to tell somebody about this", and so has just put a note on the student's file and not said anything to anyone, and perhaps not thought about how dangerous that is as well from a professional point of view.

Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) caricature the therapeutic university where tutors spend time on the therapy couch because they are unable to cope with the emotional demands of the role. This research has discovered quite the opposite, participants articulating clearly that they keep their support needs private and hidden from the institution. Rather than a culture of therapy, there is a culture of fear of being found inadequate which may prevent legitimate professional support and supervision from taking place.

Participants who were aware of professional supervision noted its potential usefulness for personal tutors whilst noting its absence from the higher education workplace. Anne-Marie thought it unlikely that managers would understand its role for personal tutors, and was wary that it might be used to judge or analyse tutors:

I don't even know if they recognize there's a need, they probably recognize that there's a need for a counsellor to have that sort of supervision, but not for a lecturer ... I don't know whether it's self-preservation, I don't know whether I want people to look at me but I do want people to know what I know and why I do it, but I don't want people to sort of analyse me on that. I would like people to know what I'm doing. I would like people or a person to be able to offload to, but I don't judging for that, I don't want analysing or counselling.

Since completing the reflective workbook activity, Dylan felt that the rhetoric of his former community practice should probably be applied in the higher education context:

So I was surprised that it could evoke that level of emotional response or requirement. But it also made me realize about the need to reflect on practice in a way I've kind of stopped doing. Also thinking back to what we preach about

supervision and support in terms of [community] practice and your senior working with you asking how you are getting on, it still needs to be done in this environment, it would be helpful. It doesn't happen but it's maybe something we should try to put in place, because we're living the practice and it does need to happen.

Angela was the only participant who felt that her manager demonstrated any semblance of interest in her work or care for her welfare. She described how he would frequently pop in for a quick chat and ask whether everything was going well. She felt she could approach him with any concerns about her personal tutoring work, and did not have the fear of being seen as weak that other participants described. Angela also described a supportive environment between colleagues and felt an informal collegial support system was in place. Phil had also spoken of supportive colleagues, which is perhaps what made him suggest 'possibly having a twinning system or mentoring system'. Evolutionary mentoring amongst colleagues was the staff support and development process recommended by Brockbank and McGill (2006), and mentoring was mentioned by Ridley (2006) as a useful development tool for personal tutors in particular. This is commensurate with forms of collegial professional development in higher education such as professionalism (Evans, 2008). The lack of collegiality and shared ethos makes such processes unlikely for most participants.

Phil was clear that supervision was needed:

For the role to be done well I think we need a much better system of supervision. Yes definitely, and I would feel much happier if I knew that I had that. Dealing with some of the issues that I have had to deal with.

Given the practice scenarios he described, this would be extremely beneficial. Phil had a good understanding of professional supervision from his wife, who is a therapist, but there are some in higher education who misunderstand its function, hence the fears about being judged inadequate. Alex had found one of the managers in his department to be sceptical about supervision, thinking it was a forum for staff complaints rather than a 'processing mechanism' as Alex describes it.

The literature on emotion work and emotional labour emphasizes the importance of institutional support mechanisms. Morley (1998) cautioned against the propensity to overlook the support needs of tutors engaged in emotion work such as personal tutoring, both by institutions and by tutors themselves. Most participants in this study recognize the need for professional supervision in relation to personal tutoring. Fear of appearing weak or inadequate appears to be the biggest barrier to asking for it.

Professional supervision is effectively a form of facilitated reflective practice. The research activity consisted of written and dialogic reflection on personal tutoring practice. Reflection was a theme in the reflective workbook prompts, as well as the prompt schedule for the individual interviews. Research aims in this area were two-fold. The reflective research process was designed to facilitate emancipatory discovery which could be taken forward as data. There was also an aim to discover whether opportunities for reflection or reflective practice were available to personal tutors as part of their professional development. Every participant made a comment about the usefulness of taking part in the study. This tended to be in response to an opening question, designed to serve as an ice-breaker, about how they had found the task of completing the reflective workbook. At this early point in the interview, researcher and participant were still getting to know one-another, and it is highly likely this question may have elicited a polite, positive response commensurate with Goffman's notion of 'face'. Despite having engaged in initial face-to-face communication or email exchange with each of the participants prior to their taking part in the study, my research journal memos note the initial sense of uncertainty about how to behave. This seemed unusual given the rapport and ease of communication that had developed prior to the study taking place. This can possibly be put down to the perceived change in relationship status. There was perhaps a fear of being judged or assessed on the reflective journals, which potentially resulted in displays of appropriate 'face'. As the discussion progressed, most participants relaxed into the rapport that had previously been established.

Three participants specifically stated at the end of the interview that they had found it extremely useful as a means of illuminating and transforming their practice. Eight out of the ten participants went beyond initial pleasantries to explain the actual impact of the reflective study. The following are indicative examples of this:

...it really surprised me about how many incidents over a short period of time that I was dealing with and even reading them back the level, the types of problems, the presenting issues and how I felt about them was surprising to me (Dylan).

I did find it helpful to articulate some of the things I was feeling, but also I noticed, oh my god have I got this thing with needing to sort something, when things are still up in the air? (Danielle).

I'd just like to echo again how useful it was, It certainly helped me to think about how I interact with students and all issues we've discussed really about whether I do the right thing or whether I feel I do the right thing, whether I've got the support or kind of the network of help that might be useful, was all really good to think about I think. I also think well gosh I deal with a lot in a day; we really do multi-task, kind of doing a bit of everything (Erica).

It is very useful to have this opportunity to reflect over a number of things. I have only got another couple of years [before retirement] where I will be seeing students ... So it is a bit late on but it will be useful (Phil).

Participants commented that the interactive and discursive nature of the study enabled them to notice features of practice and make connections, which resulted in sometimes surprising discoveries and the articulation of personal feelings about practice experiences, which are presented under various headings in this chapter. Given the purposes of facilitated reflection, it should perhaps not be surprising that the process should result in discoveries about practice. The noteworthy aspect of the comments below arises from the fact that participants appear not have had the opportunity to reflect on their practice in this way in the recent past:

Writing these reflections has been useful, because it has made me think of how I felt. Whereas before I would have this barrage of emotions rushing through but having to rush off somewhere but not actually thinking actually I was angry, or I am frustrated, or I am upset, or anything, or I feel dreadful. Whereas this has made me more aware of maybe after... I hadn't really thought of taking time whereas I now think about it a bit more. Thinking well actually when you think about it you can [realize] that is how I felt and that is why I felt like that and maybe next time I could do this so that I won't feel like that. (Angela).

It's unpacked a lot of stuff for me. And it's confirmed how much progress I've made over the last couple of years and that's been helpful. Because you don't sit down and overtly plan these things out, it's in your head and when you hear yourself talking about it you think, yes I have got that sorted, that does work in that way, there are implications in that. I need to do something about that that and that, and what would I do if I get in a bit of trouble, where's the release valve, where am I going to get that support from? (Dylan).

These comments resonate with theoretical propositions that reflecting in or on action is a fundamental means of supervizing, transforming or reviewing professional practice (Schön, 1983; 1987). The process of one-to-one interaction with a student takes place in private space, so any externality (such as professional supervision) or learning from and transforming one's own practice, relies on a process of honest, critical reflection. Without dialogue the tutor may be unable to achieve the detachment needed to avoid 'self-deception' (Habermas, 1987). The process of critical reflection, or reflective practice, is therefore crucial to achieving good quality, safe, ethical working. A facilitator, whether this is a peer or a professional supervisor, can raise awareness of 'habits of expectation' or 'distorted presuppositions' (Habermas, 1987) which may prevent the tutor from noticing and critiquing the basis on which they have conducted their practice. The manner in which the academic workload is executed can mean that time and space are not available for the reflective process to take place. The nature of the data produced during this study, and the comments made by participants, are indicative of the fact that an experienced facilitator can illuminate practice by noticing and introducing relevant factors into a reflective dialogue. The addition of a facilitator can be symbolic of the fact that specific space has been made for reflection.

For Phil and his colleagues, whilst there was no opportunity for regular facilitated reflection on practice, the academic department had appointed a co-ordinator for personal tutors. This co-ordinator ran regular updating sessions on the role and referral mechanisms for personal tutors, and was available as a resource to offer information and advice to those who were struggling with difficult personal tutoring situations. Other participants spoke of generic bulletins and memos being

issued via email giving information about services available to students within the university, and occasional optional information sessions, but there was no evidence of facilitated reflection (formal or informal) on personal tutorials. Thus the institution had no way of knowing what was happening behind the closed door of the personal tutorial, nor whether tutors had heeded bulletins or memos. Likewise there were no means by which the tutors could assess the quality, appropriateness and effectiveness of their own practice.

Participants mentioned the perceived usefulness of being able to talk things through with a colleague, as the following examples illustrate:

...sometimes just another pair of ears would help put it to bed ... and as I say it relates to the issue of whether you've done the right thing as well (Erica).

I try to be responsive to how things go just so that I can make them go better in the future. But I don't like have any formal structured framework with which to do that (Mark).

Phil and Alex each commented that professionals such as psychotherapists are required to take part in reflective supervision at frequent and regular intervals in order to explore the ethics, boundaries and efficacy of their practice. Both were aware that higher education practice tends to be deficient in reflective supervision for tutors, but Phil suggested that there is a danger of overkill in the case of a higher education tutor for whom the personal tutorial is just one of many job roles. He suggested that the interests of safer and ethical working would be best served if academic departments took measures to ensure that facilitated reflective practice, which sometimes happens informally, and frequently does not happen at all, takes place proportionately at regular intervals:

I don't think that it needs to be [the equivalent of psychotherapy] because we are not dealing day to day generally with major issues, but we need to have somebody that we talk to and can take these issues and get to know at a slightly different level. I think that people now do it informally but it is not institutionalized and it needs to be probably (Phil).

Despite their awareness of the need for reflective supervision, both Phil and Alex acknowledged they did not engage in the process, although they thought they probably should. Their comments suggest that the culture and the arrangement of workplace activities do not allow space for reflective supervision.

Where participants had experienced opportunities for facilitated reflective practice, this had not continued once the structured process had ended. It is evident from Erica's account of facilitated reflection on a training course four years previously, that she had not engaged again with facilitated reflection until she became a participant in this reflective workbook research. So, despite having found the process 'incredibly useful', reflection had ceased in the absence of facilitation. Anne-Marie noted that she had stopped reflecting after she had completed a teaching qualification for which she was required to keep reflective journals:

I've not done anything like this since I did my 7307 [post-compulsory education and training qualification]. In some ways it's a bit scary to write things down on paper because you're actually making a commitment aren't you to ...

Anne-Marie explained that the idea of the process being 'scary' related to acknowledgement of and commitment to thoughts and feelings that might otherwise not be articulated and therefore not addressed. This again indicates the usefulness of a third party in order to help explore thoughts and feelings within a supportive, developmental process.

Reflection in action sometimes happens informally when circumstances allow. All participants appeared to be natural reflectors and had been able to offer well-considered reflective journals about their personal tutorial interactions. Consequently all were able to discuss the extent to which they were ordinarily able to reflect on their practice. Will and Mark appeared uncomfortable with using this terminology to articulate the process, but they described going through a process of thinking back on and evaluating their actions, and learning from what had taken place. Both had academic or professional backgrounds where reflective practice was

not embedded culturally. Mark's comment illustrates how he reflects when the opportunity arises, but does not label it as such:

Yes, it tends to be straight afterwards rather than in any sort of more structured way. If I have a personal tutor meeting then I will think that was crap, why was that crap, or that was good why was that good? Or if I come out of a seminar I think that went well and that went badly so I will try and think what was good and remember it. But I don't really sit down and set time aside to reflect and think about my practice; it's just on the fly.

The following quotations are indicative of awareness amongst all participants that reflection on practice tends to occur informally or organically without prompting, when the working day allows:

Yeah I think you have to take on a number of...sometimes there's no time to prepare or reflect in between. It can be just bum bum bum` (Danielle).

...if they are rushing in and out you know, of my office you don't have those two minutes in between to go "I want to put this to bed..." So I find it very difficult to just go okay that's one issue, that's another issue and I haven't actually made a decision about them and said that this is how I am going to deal with it. So just that little bit of time to sort it out in my mind and put it into a compartment and move onto the next one (Angela).

These comments confirm Phil's and Alex's observations that the culture and arrangement of workplace activities does not lend itself to reflective practice, and that this is the experience in a range of disciplinary contexts.

Reflection in action is sometimes made possible when there is a journey between tasks, as Angela explains:

After I had seen the student and we had spoken and she ended up crying – it was quite emotional. I then got in my car to ... go and see the other students but I had that time in the car to sort of think about what I had done and how I should have handled it (Angela).

Erica and Martin included in their reflective workbooks, entries that were the result of reflection whilst in transit from one task to another. Whilst reflection in action will, by definition, be solitary if the action involves invisible lone working, the fact that it often takes place in transitory situations risks it becoming ephemeral in nature and not recognized explicitly when a tutor is evaluating his or her work.

Reflection on action, especially when undertaken in conjunction with a third party, can be instructive, but if the reflection in action has not been captured, then thoughts and feelings experienced at the time may be overlooked. The benefits of the reflective workbook were demonstrated by the fact that thoughts and feelings recorded close to the moment of practice could be introduced into the reflective dialogue as *aides-mémoires*. This is well illustrated by Danielle who had reflected in her workbook on interactions with a student who had transformed into a more confident and successful learner. Danielle was reflecting in a negative way about her work with this particular student and did not recall that she had made a successful intervention until it was pointed out to her:

JH: But this one has returned to you – it's a bit of a success story. But what about your role in that. Because you talk about how she's changed things round. Can you track where you have actually helped her to change?

Danielle: It never occurred to me I'll be honest. It's the first time I've thought of it.

Alex, who has experience as a reflective practitioner from a previous career, also had a tendency to focus on negativity:

JH: we may expand on the points of the things that you have mentioned. A lot of feeling anxious and frustrated.

Alex: Those are things that stick in your head aren't they? If things went well, I think that was fine so I just tend to forget it.

Opportunities for 'critical reflection' (Mezirow, 1990) were generally not available to participants. Those for whom reflective practice was part of the practice culture in their former professions, became aware from undertaking the reflective workbook study that they had not been reflecting in the same way on their higher education practice. These comments suggest this can be attributed in part to lack of third party facilitation:

But it also made me realize about the need to reflect on practice in a way I've kind of stopped doing. Also thinking back to what we preach about supervision and support in terms of [community] practice and your senior working with you asking how you are getting on, it still needs to be done in this environment, it would be helpful. It doesn't happen but it's maybe something we should try to put in place, because we're living the practice and it does need to happen. Just even that basic level of how are you doing? How are you getting on? (Dylan).

Well yeh or then it's far more tempting to not do it, you don't really do it because there's no recipient, no-one makes you think differently about what you're doing like you have with me with the questions that you've asked that have then made me think, oh yeh I'll think about that one a bit deeper...(Alex).

There was similar acknowledgement from participants who were previously unfamiliar with the reflective practice process:

It's like talking today has made connections that I hadn't quite realized before. It's like the stuff about email and who do you go and talk to and that sort of thing so I found it quite a useful tool. It gets you more into the mindset of looking back on your interactions and your lessons. I think that it is quite useful in that sort of respect (Mark).

I was interested in how you termed that I viewed them as problem students and now students with a problem in a later one – I don't think that I view them as problem students in that – oh god, here's a problem student... you know – I view them as students with problems but yeah I think it has affected it because I think that you have to become a little bit colder, whether you show that to them, because otherwise you're gonna get affected by it (Danielle).

So, there is an over-arching impression of discoveries made possible by a process of dialogic reflection, for which opportunities do not appear to exist within the workplace. Phil looked back 30 years to when he commenced teaching in higher education. At that time colleagues engaged in peer supervision of taught sessions, observing or videoing and commenting on their practice, and engaging in discursive reflection. He finds that is less likely to happen nowadays. In the case of the ten participants, only Will was experiencing peer observation and discussion as part of his assessment for the Postgraduate Certificate for Teaching in Higher Education (PGCert) which most newer lecturers are required to undertake in order to become a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA).

Reflection did not prove to be a universal panacea, however. During the face-to-face discussion, Will explained that one of the key motivators for taking part in the reflective workbook study had been the fact that he has to produce a reflective portfolio about his teaching practice for the PGCert. He explained that he was not enjoying the PGCert programme of study, which he found to be delivered

inefficiently, and not relevant to improving his practice. This negative view, exacerbated by resentment at having been required to undertake the programme, had led to an instrumental approach to study:

Yes later, when I hand in my portfolio then I need to say look at me being reflexive, and oh I didn't realise if this was good practice or bad practice. And I would contrive something for my portfolio. Just because I don't want to do the course but I have to.

He goes on to say, however, that the reflective workbook exercise, with its prompts designed to question practice, had facilitated a process whereby he has produced genuine, honest reflection that can be placed in his PGCert portfolio. Otherwise he would simply have produced something instrumental, something written to pass rather than to make a meaningful exploration of practice:

So, but that aside, doing this exercise is one of the reasons that I thought it was potentially interesting is that it does enable me to draw on those things and actually put them into my portfolio. Probably without being asked to do the exercise by you I would have stuck something looking like reflective practice in my portfolio and handed that in. But it would have been very much based around what I thought they wanted to hear.

There may be many reasons for this response, not least of which is the potential of counter-suggestibility resulting from resentment at being forced to engage in a programme of study. This single case does demonstrate, however, the real potential that students being assessed by reflection according to specific learning outcomes may, for whatever reason, produce reflective accounts designed merely to evidence learning outcomes at a superficial, instrumental level rather than to make genuine discoveries about self and practice. The commonality between this account and those of the other participants is that by engaging voluntarily with the reflective workbook for this research project, opportunities arose for facilitated reflection which resulted in genuine, meaningful, transformative discoveries about practice, as envisaged by theorists such as Mezirow and Habermas. This would seem to concur with academic commentators who express concern that models of assessed reflection which incorporate prescribed competencies may simply result in a process of socialization to embed models of accepted behaviour, thereby compromising transformatory potential (Ecclestone, 1996; Clegg, 2000; Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009;

Macfarlane and Gourlay, 2009). As Evans (2007) states in her model of professional development, there is a need to recognize the need for transformation in identifying the nature and cause of an imperfect situation. Unless tutors are epistemologically committed to the idea of the meaningfulness of reflection for illuminating and improving practice, they are unlikely to produce the honesty and genuine transformation that is sought. A collegial approach to collaborative reflection can be a motivator for facilitating reflective practice.

The outcomes for participants of taking part in this reflective study, as documented in Appendix 8, seem to indicate that all participants have benefited in some way from having had the opportunity to reflect on their practice, and in many cases this has resulted in heightened contextual awareness in relation both to students' needs and to institutional policy imperatives. There have been noteworthy changes in personal tutoring practice, particularly boundary-setting and referral mechanisms. There is evidence that some participants have developed increased confidence in the usefulness of student services professionals, and are more willing to make referrals. Some participants have been reading around the literature related to personal tutoring.

The research imperative continues to predominate in the institutional contexts of all participants, and in some cases stronger boundary-setting and referral mechanisms have arisen out of a need to make space for the range of research and bureaucratic tasks the participants are required to perform. The theme of diminishing resources and the threat to future funding appears to be having an effect upon workloads and expectations, which for some participants has affected the cultural possibilities of working in a more collegial manner.

Prospects of the creation of spaces for better-developed team and collegial approaches in relation both to time and space in the higher education workplace seem remote, particularly in the current context of financial instability. This is an

area of concern given that the literature and the data analysis both pointed to the potential efficacy of a more collegial approach to the development and support of personal tutors.

Collegiality

Where collegial activity was described by participants, this was largely an informal *ad hoc* experience that took place when there was time. There was a sense in which discussions and mutual support about personal tutoring issues had developed around friendship groups rather than programme or disciplinary teams, Angela explains:

we are also a small group of staff and we do tend to chat so ... and we occasionally go for coffee but we do offload on each other and talk about “well I’ve had this problem”....or “that” problem and we share. I think that that helps a lot that sharing with your colleagues.

Angela wrote in one of her workbook reflections about an occasion when she had requested the assistance of a team colleague who had some experience of disability issues, because Angela had felt out of her depth with a particularly complex student problem. Alex had a similar view of his team colleagues, but this had developed more around a shared team understanding of the nature of personal tutoring practice, as well as a more informal opportunity to offload at the end of a busy day:

I think it’s safe to say that although it’s really informal we have almost a peer supervision system – because we set out our confidentiality boundaries really clearly within the space in which we work we do talk about [students] and often in quite a positive way – which sounds a little bit utopian, but about finding solutions and about if you’ve not known what to do for the best ... with the student, maybe somebody else will, and the other thing is sometimes you finish with some [students] and you just have a lot of negative energy, or if you’re seeing [students] back to back then your last student of the day you just go- you know you might need to outpour a little bit.

There were barriers to collegial working in the personal tutoring context, and Danielle described a situation when she and one particular colleague (whom we shall call John) had almost formed a practice community of two despite belonging to

a much larger programme team. Danielle explained that many colleagues tended to avoid or deflect contact with students, and this had resulted in she and John becoming known as the ones for students to go to. This made Danielle feel singled out and weak. Danielle explained how she gets positive feedback from John about her personal tutoring practice:

I mentioned earlier about some people I would speak to and some I wouldn't. John is one of the ones I would speak to – but he also puts quite a lot on me. He'll phone me up, blah blah student, and one I've been dealing with a lot that came back to him last year, we had to get her in and we convinced her to leave and to take the DipHE and he was really praising me, saying my god you were so good in there, I was really skirting around it, and he sent me an email thanking me not just for that but generally what I do as a tutor with the students so yeah I think turning it on its head you know what I was saying about being seen as weak, I think with somebody like John I'm probably seen as being very competent – a good member of staff to have on board to do that role.

Dylan explained how the individualism and competition arising out of the research agenda had made team working and collegiality difficult:

There are tensions here as a school. Often people are quite individualistic, research can be a quite individualistic task, people are quite protective of what they're doing, there are drivers towards you doing your own thing and not worrying about what anyone else is doing. And as a school we have more team working now than ever before but it's not always been easy to achieve because by definition people aren't used to that way of working.

He went on to explain that, in reality, there was very little in the way of collegial working:

It becomes back to this thing of competing demands. You're being driven to act individually and be responsible. On some occasions like do your own research do your own stuff, achieve and do all that, and then when it suits on another side you've to be collegiate as well. So it's hard to do those two things simultaneously because it would be easier if there was that collegiate responsibility, recognition, working together. If that was then also inculcated into the research side where we were working together and then that would make much more sense. But it doesn't appear to work that way so people just close the door and get on with what they're achieving, so some difficulties around that I think.

There was a similar situation for Erica who explained an incident, unrelated to personal tutoring, which demonstrated how some colleagues were pursuing their personal career agendas at the expense of other colleagues. This had been raised at a

team meeting, and the whole topic of collegiality had become a matter for discussion:

It's an issue which is beginning to crop up; we had a staff meeting last week where this issue of collegiality cropped up. Work pressures and all the targets we are being asked to meet is being thrown down people's throats and is obviously the priority, but perhaps it's the issue about giving all students the supervision and the time – the minimum really – that we are being required to give them is being compromised...As a school we've always placed strong emphasis on collegiality, for example we have notional equality in teaching hours, so everybody does the same. And we've always held onto that we are all research active, we all have the same number of teaching hours, we all have admin responsibilities and there's equality. I think now we're beginning to see that's being stretched and pulled in so many directions that we've got to think about giving those who are less research active more admin and teaching responsibilities, allowing those who have got the potential to do well at research to be given the greater opportunity to flourish at that. I think we are beginning to realize we need to have perhaps a bit more flexibility in our workload model and that we need to somehow, I don't know whether we reached any conclusion about collegiality but at least there was a discussion about it and an awareness of reminding everybody about their obligations.

Despite the strong emphasis on collegiality, Erica explained that in practice this was not applied by all:

Again I think it probably varies between staff and individuals. You will find that some people are very collegiate and copy maybe up to 10 people into an email, others don't, but my experience has always been it's better to involve the relevant people in the discussion and come to a collective view or judgement and make sure you are all giving the same information. It just avoids any conflict, it avoids colleagues undermining one another, and it avoids students being given conflicting bits of information or the potential to play one off against the other, so it's probably experience but that's always the best way of doing it. But it's probably a bit ad hoc between people. But I know from my experience if a student came to me and said so and so had said something, a member of staff had said something and I hadn't been involved in a discussion, I wouldn't feel very happy about it I suppose.

In terms of offloading to colleagues or sharing practice experiences, this was *ad hoc* and informal, and Erica related this to the lack of shared time and space:

Not enough I don't think. We've got the coffee room ...although the time to use that is increasingly squeezed I think. The common room we've got [is shared with others] so we tend not to use that so there aren't that many shared spaces. We've all got our own offices, as you can see we can shut the door, I think the capacity and the space for that kind of collective sharing is minimal really. I quite like to have a coffee or a lunch with people and have a chat and I think sometimes I would go out of the building rather than stay here, but again I don't do that often at all.

For Phil, although collegiality around personal tutoring took place informally, he described a more solid, reciprocal process between colleagues he had known for quite some time. He put this down to having worked in the same department for a number of years. He expressed concern about younger colleagues who were at the start of their careers. He felt they had less opportunity for collegial ways of discussing and sharing practice because the demands of research and bureaucracy were much greater for them than they had been for him at the start of his career thirty years ago. He explained the sharing of practice and teamwork approach to personal tutoring:

... because I have been here a very, very long time and because I work in [this department] where we do talk about these kinds of things. So I could go and see a number of my colleagues and equally down the corridor here in this department, but two doors along ... she has now been doing it for about three years, so I would talk to her. She also organizes [some] teaching so I would talk to her about any student in [that] year that might be having a problem ... The next door person ... I talk to him about [those] students. ... So I have a lot of professional support ... within walking distance...Beyond that there are a group of friends and teaching colleagues... who I could go and talk to and who I do go and talk to if I have a particular problem...

Martin also had a historical perspective from a higher education institution where he had worked some years ago:

It's the kind of things you see in schools where usually men play football on a Friday afternoon or whatever. But you do see it in places and it is to be valued I think. There was always someone who was paid to serve the coffee and all this kind of thing. You can say that that some of that is patronizing and all that, but what it did was create a space. The staff ... you wouldn't agree with them all, and it was very twee you could say ... but it was the way to get to know people. That was quite valuable ... So I think that I think that was probably reflective of the kind of collegiate kind of approach and I am not sure that that operates now.

Martin went on to explain that he and his programme team colleagues in his current workplace attempted to meet weekly, but that they were criticized for it by their line manager. This was indicative of a culture that did not value collegial activity:

Now that dynamic doesn't operate here. They couldn't even fill the water machine in the staff room from when I came here ... I kept going on about it, through 'til about two years later. There is still a staff room, but...

Will's workbook entries had given the impression of frequent discussions with colleagues over coffee about a variety of issues, including interactions with students. He explained that this was perhaps unusual, but that the department does operate collegially. He had also explained a discussion at a team meeting about the boundaries of personal tutoring practice, and had conveyed a sense of team consensus:

I think that perhaps the period that we captured there might have been, I suppose it might have covered a bit of the summer and autumn so maybe a couple of new people had joined so there was a degree of that. Trying to look ahead towards future research projects and so on. So maybe the degree of coffee drinking was over represented. But still I think that we are in a fairly open and collegiate department, so for example, I am working on just some sort of teaching and learning sort of stuff on an *ad hoc* basis with a colleague from my department and we were chatting about a common problem that we had had basically communicating with to some of our students. So I said I am thinking about doing this I will give you a draft. I sent him the draft of the outline of discussion thing, he had a go at it added a few bits; we sent it off to a colleague who is in fact more specialist in learning and teaching. Waited to see what he said and then we are good to go on it.

There is resonance in these accounts with Trowler's assertion (2008) that the availability of shared space can have an effect on the extent to which collegiality takes place. It is not entirely clear, however, whether shared space has declined in response to an existing culture of individualism, rather than being the cause of it. Participants' accounts seem to indicate that there are personality barriers as well as barriers related to the built environment. The four participants who experienced the most collegiate activity in relation to personal tutoring – Phil, Martin, Will and Alex, had clearly benefited from engagement in discussions with colleagues and articulated the most well-developed sense of a personal tutoring practice ethos. These four seemed more confident in their practice, and there was less ambivalence and affirmation-seeking than that expressed by some participants.

Discussion about wider social and policy issues tended not to occur naturally within the individual interviews. This can perhaps be attributed to the lack of collegial discussion and debate experienced in the workplace by participants. Social and policy debates were introduced into the interviews as prompts for discussion and,

following grounded theory principles, topics that had been raised by participants in previous interviews were introduced into subsequent interviews. The debates in the higher education literature were new knowledge for all participants. This meant it was difficult to stimulate discussion on literature themes because some participants clearly had not considered their practice in the light of these debates.

The caveat that research with individuals who are outside the context of their workgroups risks obscuring the significance of cultural and institutional effects (Trowler, 2008) is useful to the analysis here. It could reasonably be argued that the decision to interview individuals has essentially produced an individual account. It could equally be argued, however, that the essence of the research was to encourage individual personal tutors to begin the process of articulating their experience of personal tutorials. The purpose of this individual approach related to a suspicion (borne out by the data) that tutors had little opportunity to articulate and discuss their personal tutoring experiences with significant others in the workplace. Consequently discoveries made via this study are revelatory and individual or personal. The types of collective discussion that would develop dialogue in communities of practice need to be underpinned by individuals' awareness of their own practice. A workgroup of tutors who have not had the opportunity to reveal tacit knowledge about their own practice would potentially have some difficulty with collective critical dialogue. This perhaps goes some way towards explaining why such discussion rarely takes place in the workplace contexts of participants in this research..

Garot (2004) found that back-stage activity such as humour was deployed as a collective coping mechanism amongst staff. This research has discovered that staff collectivism or collegiality is not much in evidence in the workplaces of participants. Consequently back-stage is replaced by off-stage whereby friends and partners have been used for support, in particular by Phil, Erica, Anne-Marie and Danielle, although Phil also had support from colleagues in the workplace. Possibly because

of the lack of collegiality, participants did not describe any scenarios of emotional contagion between colleagues (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2000; Bakker *et al*, 2006). Sloan *et al*'s proposition (2004) that those in 'people occupations' are likely to express anger to someone other than the target of the anger was borne out by participants who described offloading anger and other emotions to partners at home.

Ethos of Personal Tutoring

Chapter 2 identified the lack of a shared sense of the professional ethos of the personal tutoring role. Many participants' comments are indicative of their understanding of the boundaries of the role. The following comments broadly indicate the extent to which the operation of boundaries can be seen as a survival mechanism in the face of competing workload pressures:

When I first arrived here I think I was maybe giving too much support to students. I would love to sustain giving students that level of support, but there are issues for your own sanity. A lot of the time I see students in between teaching. There is no time for admin, I was doing it at home and working all hours. I have planned in a day a week when I work at home to get my work done without interruption. There are now boundaries related to survival "If I don't do these things then I'm not going to survive" (Angela).

You maybe get people attracted to this field that tend to be 'do-ers' or 'people people' rather than intrinsically academic or intellectual. So therefore they're going to resist that [pressure to reduce contact time with students in favour of research] anyway, but having said that they still need to meet the core demands so something has to give. But I suggest the people who do that, who adopt that position, who don't have the clearer boundaries, they're the ones that suffer from that because they need to work longer hours, they need to find other ways of dealing with the other stuff that they're not doing because they're dealing with the students (Dylan).

There is an impression here that those who spend a lot of time with students do so at the expense of their own work-life balance. Dylan and Angela's comments are indicative of a theme of boundaries that resonated throughout the data, partly because it was introduced as one of the issues to explore through critical reflection, but also because it was pertinent to how participants experienced their working lives. So, what criteria defined the notion of boundary for each participant? How did they know what they should incorporate within the personal tutoring boundary, and what should remain outside?

Before I was always very sympathetic it was perhaps a bit too sympathetic and I really took it to heart where now I am a little bit more distant and I get a little bit more angry because they are making demands on my time which I do feel bad about. But I think that it is part of my change and hopefully I will reach a point of being able to give, as you say, that emotion without getting emotionally involved (Angela).

Yes we have hours for *academic* tutoring which is supposed to be around progressing students academically in their research and writing although it's not necessarily about personal issues, I get the impression although I don't know if it's written anywhere that other issues should be passed on to counsellors or nursing staff here or student services/student support – it seems to be that there's nothing recognised that module tutors or programme leaders, or whatever term is used, actually take on that pastoral care, that personal tutoring and looking at the individual needs and care of the students (Anne-Marie).

The following extracts illustrate the lack of certainty about the boundaries of the personal tutoring role:

I have never really thought about it like that, that there are people who actively take themselves out of the situation and keep themselves away from student involvement really. They do their teaching sessions but they don't get involved in the sort of 'I am available for you'. It's quite obvious really. That is not necessarily a bad thing because our teaching role doesn't say that we have to be there to that extent for that person or personal support. But somebody needs to be there for them doesn't there. There needs to be somebody in the school who is going to be a listening ear. I think, I don't know, perhaps there shouldn't be (Angela).

I think that it's actually quite helpful; there are limits to it, so that when someone comes to ask what they can do, you think, well you had better go and see the office actually, as I genuinely don't know. There are probably one or two things that probably I should know. What if I failed my exam but have passed my coursework what happens then? It's like, oh I don't think it matters but you need to double check. Actually, I should know but they would still need to double check it with the office. The regulations might have changed or given how they scored in other modules. There are a whole range of different things (Will).

You kind of acquire the knowledge, so there are often these grey areas where you don't necessarily know all the rules and regulations on what a student can do, and we are quite flexible at times, especially where there are health or other issues, so there are occasions when you are in a little bit of a grey area where you are saying well we'll have to see there might be something we can do (Erica).

There is ambiguity about institutional processes as well as ambivalence about what the individual believes the role of the tutor should be. None of the participants articulated any knowledge of the three key models ('pastoral', 'professional' and 'curriculum') denoted in the literature. In fact literature on personal tutoring was largely unfamiliar to all participants when it was introduced into the interview discourse. There was one exception. Alex, as a psychotherapist, was particularly familiar with counselling theory, and was also interested in transactional analysis

and emotional intelligence, so his discussion about boundaries was strongly underpinned by a sense of practice ethos.

During interview discussion Alex went into some detail about his practice ethos and how this relates to boundaries in his personal tutoring interactions in higher education. Whilst this is evidence of the existence of a clear personal tutoring practice ethos which is arguably absent from the accounts of some participants, it is clearly derived from another professional context and is not located specifically in the higher education context.

...and the other way I do that is through managing boundaries, I suppose I get some of my personal needs met by trying to be authentic around boundaries, so I make it clear that I'm not the person to talk to about this, and I can see why they would try to talk to me about it, but then I might be inauthentic when I say 'it's not that I don't want to listen' when I might really be thinking "I don't want to listen", because of the emotional intelligence thing, the more years I've done this the more I'm aware of a state of emotional hijack, which is all Daniel Goleman's stuff.

And the thing is as well when you do TA stuff, you know that some people, they come looking for that actually, and if they're not getting that elsewhere ...It's to pull you onto the drama triangle and I just refuse to do it so I'm like a paragon of neutrality!

... and that's why congruence is important as well which is the third one of Rogers's core conditions because actually to some degree I believe in trying to be honest with the students so I don't think it's helpful to just paper over cracks, and so sometimes I am quite challenging depending...but then that in itself is really hard work actually it would be easy to sit there and just go 'oh yeh it must be terrible for you'.

Martin's workbook entries were similarly detailed in terms of articulating the ethos behind skills used and decisions made. During interview Martin explained that his personal tutoring ethos is based on personal knowledge of the individual student who is presenting with the problem or issue. His pedagogical position centres on starting with where the individual is located and helping him or her to move on from that position. This is underpinned by an ethos of humanism derived from his previous professional practice which he now applies to the higher education context. Martin's reflections and discussion revealed a great deal of knowledge about the personal circumstances of the students under discussion, which is similar

to most of the participants' accounts of practice, with the exception of Will and Mark who did not appear to value such detailed knowledge of the students about whom they were writing and discussing.

The following comments reveal more clearly the extent to which the boundaries of personal tutoring are located with the individual rather than a collective or professional practice ethos:

... it would be at the end of being too restrictive in the sense of having too clear a boundary, one could argue. But I do think there are some saving graces in that in the sense that students do stop me in the corridor, all those indicators suggest that the relationship is healthy, they understand it and they are happy with it. So on balance I think it's better that end than the other end would be my guess. But I suppose really it shows us how did I get to this place in such a short time? And part of that's to do with the type of person I am and maybe having a view about how the work should be done (Dylan).

Yeh, because the idea of saying to somebody who's in need 'you can't, not cos I'm teaching or something but because I'm having me lunch, there's an awful sense of guilt, you know I don't come from a catholic family but my amount of catholic guilt is enormous (Alex).

I'm just trying to support her with that cos I couldn't... with my personality and my attitude wouldn't allow me to go in and say "right, where's your assignments? I'll see you in a few weeks" and I have to have that personal contact with her because in finding out how she is from her perspective also helps me to bring information back here for me to follow the necessary procedures to support her or look forward to the future (Anne-Marie).

One thing I struggle with as well is that I'm frustrated that ...sounds like I'm being some sort of martyr, but I'm doing more than a lot of other staff in the department, and that frustrates me because on the one hand I think – well I could do nothing because I think I think well I'm opening myself up to be spending time with these demanding students, but I don't have to – but then I struggle with – that they're human beings and that is my role isn't it? (Danielle).

Yes I did wonder have I promised too much. She was so physically upset, and it's partly my personality I suppose, I thought I've got to say something to make her feel better (Erica).

There was evidence that some university departments had been making attempts to define the boundaries of the personal tutoring role at team level:

Yes. It is something that you do talk about the nature of the personal tutees, or personal tutoring and I think that there is some research going on here at the

moment to understand what that role should actually be. I think that the consensus amongst my colleagues when it has come up in meetings and stuff that it is largely we hope that you become better academically, and if that touches on some of your personal issues then we can touch on them in that respect, and maybe if it is just a bit of general guidance you are after then fair enough, but if it is something which we think is beyond our remit then give to people who know how to deal with it (Will).

One of the people who's on the phone to me the most is the head of department, who uses me for ideas of how to support and bounce ideas of how to engage them, how to try and disengage them from being so dependent on the tutors in the department, so yeh, and that's interesting (Alex).

In Will's context, the discussion appeared to have been restricted to where the boundaries should be and had not, at that point, progressed to consider the skills and techniques required for tutors to work within those boundaries in the same way Alex's had. Will's was the only context where there was a separate academic office to deal with issues such as mitigating circumstances, however, so there was some precedent for separating personal from the academic issues. This was augmented by a strong student support service located centrally within the institution. From cues in Will's description of practice, it was discernable that he had developed the routine of referring students to the academic office through being socialized into the practice via a process of situated experiential learning (Wenger, 1998). It seemed this functional separation was embedded culturally in the practices of tutors and students, demonstrated in part by Will's belief that students did not seek out tutors for help and advice with personal issues:

JH: And I don't get the impression that you experience that [tearful students with personal problems]?

Will: No. I think that it's actually quite helpful; there are limits to it, so that when someone comes to ask what they can do. You think, well you had better go and see the office actually, as I genuinely don't know. .. If you go there with a proper question you will get an answer and then that is sorted. I think that is the way to do it. If you are actually after an answer to a particular question then go and ask the right person. If you want a chat about something else then yes fine. But again find the right person to do it. If it's me great no problems, if it's not me then we will explore who the right person to speak to might be.

So far the data have demonstrated that, with few exceptions, there appears to be an absence of professional or institutional reference points, or if such reference points

exist, research participants appear to be unaware of them. So participants' judgements about the boundaries of personal tutoring were based on singular or idiosyncratic ideas of what the role should consist of. This seems to have led to judgements being made about the practice of others which can only be made from a personal reference point. The following comments are suggestive of participants differentiating their practice from the practice of others:

Yes but I would never have done the things she has, invite the students to her house for a meal or go round to their house and [intervene in a dispute with their family] that's a bit ridiculous (Danielle).

Yes, I think that everybody does their fair share in supporting the students from an academic point of view – from the 'what they should be doing' point of view. But I don't think that emotionally everybody supports the students. Perhaps they are more experienced teachers so they have been around for a lot longer and they realize that actually I have got so much to do this is impacting on me, I don't know. Or perhaps they genuinely don't feel they can or want to. They will give them the help and refer them to the correct source of information, but they won't necessarily spend ages sitting in the office talking to them (Angela).

Oh I have interaction with them, yeah yeah, but I just don't spend five hours in an afternoon with them. If there's problems with the course or a student's fallen down or something, they'll come to me so I have to deal with those situations because I have the overall management responsibility so I deal with those kinds of things.

JH You don't tend to get the 'my boyfriend's just finished with me...'?

No I don't get that.

JH So where do your students go for that then?

They'll either go to a colleague or they'll do it within their friends or whatever, but they don't do it to me. Do you think I should? (Dylan).

I think that certain courses and certain people in the senior management here see the course like [ours] as too supportive to its students (Martin).

These comments suggest that personal tutoring experiences for tutors and students are at best uneven, and at worst lack equity. This is particularly obvious in the differences between the practices of Will, who believes it is not his job to seek out students who appear to be struggling, and Danielle who believes in a more proactive role, and whose reflective accounts demonstrate the extent to which she is prepared to contact students whom she believes might be in difficulties. Both believe they are right in their approach, the notion of being right based on their own

intrinsic motivations. There is evidence of Danielle 'othering' colleagues who take a different approach from her own:

I often feel that the staff think the personal tutoring role is a pain and not something they want to do – they will engage as little as possible, and I think many actively doing that are able to because students don't go much to them (Danielle).

Although Alex had a very good working relationship with colleagues in student services, one of his reflective accounts related to the fact that a student had become distressed by the response from a disability advisor, which he subsequently discussed at interview:

Yeh the righteous indignation I felt about it! Because I am aware that other services in the university, even though they are supporting services, don't operate in the same way we do, or that there is less internal consistency in the way individuals will deal with things. Whereas we have quite a good internal consistency, I think our ethos is very consistent, and if that began to change that would be something that would really concern me, that would be something I would want to look at with my colleagues, but I am aware that that doesn't exist everywhere, but I was absolutely furious that somebody should be made to feel that way.

Alex articulates a strong sense of team ethos which he expresses by 'othering' other teams at the university. The sense of 'othering' is also apparent in another of Alex's comments:

... then we have other departments, some of the scientific schools that just don't engage with this sort of thing at all, don't really – it takes a crisis for there to be anything noticeable to do with pastoral liaison or supporting students in distress or in great need. That's my perception... if we get something like engineering it's not that there's something wrong, but my experience, my anecdotal experience from listening to students is that they are not set up at all to do, to cope.

Will and Mark each articulate an intrinsic, self-focused rationale for their boundary-setting:

Well in a way, my boundaries come, like you said, from the fact that I've only got a limited amount of time and also that I am only being paid this much so I am not going to waste any more time than I think is appropriate for the level of money (Mark).

Yes, you need to really good and sort of bullet-proof on what you are doing. Great, but actually if you spend time sort of continually refining and improving, like making marginal improvements that soak up lots of time. Your students only notice the benefit, you certainly don't get the benefit because it is soaking up your research time and you are not getting promoted, not getting advancement and you might get kicked out if you don't do your research (Will).

If a student is particularly upset, then I feel sorry for them but I don't feel the compulsion to counsel them or help them with anything other than regarding their academic work. Really, my feeling is that is that I want them to go away as soon as I possibly can in the most decent way. I will help them... No, no I want to help them with the stuff that relates to me not with anything else (Mark).

Some participants clearly believed that the difference in boundaries between tutors meant that some would be sought out by students in preference to others. This was the cause of intrinsic ethical dilemmas for those who felt, from a perspective of personal values, that they should be open to spending time with students who were requesting help, yet also felt a sense of resentment at the effects this was having on workload and energy levels:

I felt that she was pressurizing me into being her sort of personal sort of information giver. So I think it also has repercussions if you are too nice to them and you do help them. They come more often with more problems and bigger problems! And I do normally give the students We have student support here and we have student support at [another campus] and I do have the contact numbers and the pamphlet and I do give it to them. But they don't always take advantage, you know there is always "Oh I've spoken to you now so I feel better ...I do find that students do go to particular people within the school. They don't go to everybody; we have got a personal tutor system so theoretically they are evenly spread out for personal issues. But it doesn't happen like that, they choose the person that they feel comfortable with. And I find that I am one of those people, and that is because I've obviously given the impression that I want to help that I am there for you etc. Which I think is great because that is how I feel, but then sometimes I get angry with myself for being that giving, if that makes sense. It's a bit of a contradiction in a way (Angela).

Another girl I've been dealing with quite a lot over the past few years, and she didn't turn up at the last lot of exams and so the secretary was there calling me and telling me "she only wants to speak to you" so again they get wise as to who to speak to don't they and I think it would be that the other members of staff wouldn't have been called on – there were certain people in that sort of situation that the secretary would call on...there is a real ambivalence between listening to somebody and helping them out of that situation and thinking why am I doing this? (Danielle).

I think students get to know quickly which staff are more likely to be available or make themselves available to meet, and which not. And it doesn't take them long to work that one out, and it's no surprise then when people take on more and some staff see students more than others (Erica).

The sense of ambivalence or contradiction expressed by some tutors was perhaps linked to the absence of a professional ethos which meant there was a lack of clarity about doing the right thing professionally. Goffman's concept of 'facework' (1967)

acknowledges that the sense of morality is often located with the individual, but the ritual of social encounters demands practices to be employed that conform to expectations of both parties in the encounter. Dylan recognized explicitly the tutor's dilemma of personal versus professional ethics, stating:

We owe it to ourselves to actually unpack that and think some of that stuff through. Whether you have a personal ethic or whatever it's different from actually having it in the job role.

Other participants referred to their personal sense of ethics, and their accounts of practice demonstrated where this had presented a personal versus professional dilemma, but this was inferred in the analysis rather than recognized and stated explicitly by participants.

Analysis of data on the topic of collegiality indicates that the collegial processes that could perhaps have helped to develop a sense of the appropriate professional ethos via a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) do not appear to be present for most participants. Likewise analysis of participants' comments about professional supervision gives the impression that there is no effective means of discussing one's own personal tutoring practice in order to develop a sense of the professional self. There is little evidence of opportunities for self development at a collegial or a supervisory level, so ambivalence about doing the right thing as a personal tutor is perhaps to be expected.

Most participants made it clear that some tutors give the impression they are available for students, and others do not, or do so to a lesser extent. Some have made assumptions that students seek out tutors who give a more welcoming impression because they know they will receive the desired help. It could be argued that this caricatures students who seek help as rather needy individuals, and certainly some of the participants' reflective accounts offer perceptions of such student neediness. There is, however, an alternative analysis. When viewed through the lens of Goffman's concept of 'face' it could be the case that students are responding according to what they perceive to be established rituals. Once a tutor

has become established as one who is welcoming (or is not welcoming) to students with problems, tutors and students are likely to behave in ways that preserve this understanding or interaction ritual. Staff may become known for not being very effective or sympathetic tutors, or for having particular boundaries, and will have smaller workloads in this area, enabling them to concentrate on other areas of activity. The students who are shrewd enough to work out which tutors to go to, and are able to make their way to the head of the inevitable queue of students, will attain the most tutorial time. Of course the full picture can only be drawn by asking students why they approach particular tutors, and this will perhaps be a future study to complement this tutor-focused research and clarify the perspective of another key stakeholder in the personal tutoring process. Given the specific focus of this research on the tutor perspective, the purpose is not to triangulate this data with data from the student perspective. It is to illuminate the experiences and perceptions of tutors in order to gain some understanding of how they experience the process.

Approaches from students who arrived at the office or at the end of a lecture without an appointment were often the most problematic for participants. I challenged participants about the opportunity for them to exercise choice and control by asking students who arrive unannounced to return at a more convenient time. Two participants were comfortable with this, but five stated that this wouldn't feel like the right thing to do. This can be linked to Mezirow's habits of expectation. The interview dialogue had identified a presupposition about practice – that some tutors feel they should react immediately to requests for a tutorial from a student who needs help with a problem. Ogbonna and Harris (2004) found similar patterns. If this were to be explored critically it could be argued that gate-keeping is unevenly applied. Some tutors have mechanisms in place such as 'office hours' or 'email triage' and do not see students without an appointment. Student services professionals usually have reception facilities to enable a student to make appointments, and do not see students without an appointment. Yet there was a

habit of expectation that was difficult to overcome for those participants who saw it as their role to see students on demand. Participants seemed unable to articulate why they thought they should operate in this way, largely making statements such as 'it just wouldn't feel right', and making associations with feelings of guilt. One participant explained that students' difficulties are not experienced only during office hours, and felt that she should be willing to help on demand because there was no-one else to go to. It is not clear from the data how these positions have developed, although there was some evidence that students arrive with expectations that they will be seen by that particular tutor, and do not make similar demands of tutors whom they know will not be open to an unplanned tutorial. The idea that turning a student away wouldn't seem right can possibly be linked to Goffman's concept of 'face' (1955) and the maintenance of the equilibrium of the encounter by performing to moral rules. The tutor may feel that by turning away a student they are defying moral rules and demonstrating a lack of caring. Further work would be needed in order to analyse the roots of these firmly entrenched positions, but evidence from this study demonstrates a position based on the participant's own personality rather than any collectively negotiated idea of practice ethos.

Feminist writers (Leathwood and Hey, 2009; Bellas, 1999; Morley 1998) have argued there is a gendered distinction between research and student support work, research being valued for its masculine rationality, student support being undervalued as feminine nurturing. Participants did not appear to be in touch with the idea of gendered work, and were not familiar with the literature on gendered work in higher education. This meant that, although there was clear evidence from all participants that research was valued by institutions more highly than supporting students, it was not possible to draw out a gendered discourse. There was no evidence that the sex of participants was an issue in the extent to which male or female participants identified with their roles in supporting students. It was possible to identify, however, a thread emerging inductively from the data, whereby the three participants who were parents drew on their parenting experience to

describe their roles with students. All participants used nurturing imagery which they either identified with or distanced themselves from in terms of personal tutoring practice. The three career-focused participants (Mark, Dylan and Will) disassociated themselves from nurturing. So, whilst Hochschild (2003) suggests that emotion work is undertaken more by females who are performing the nurturing role of protomother, it can be argued that within this sample, the nurturing role, whilst being linked by parents with parenting, was taken on board by participants regardless of their sex. Leathwood and Hay (2009) argued that males undertaking emotion work would be praised and valued for this, whereas women's emotion work would be overlooked as natural female behaviour. The individualized context of data collection means that it was not set up to capture such comparisons. There was no evidence that individual participants were aware of this gendered expectation, but data collection based on focus group or workgroup discussion might be more likely to produce data on this topic.

Chapter 6 Discussion

Introduction

Chapter 5 has highlighted two overarching themes – the unsupported and unrecognized nature of the emotional labour undertaken by personal tutors, and the lack of opportunity for professional support and development in this area of higher education activity.

On examining the micro-level of the specific interactive work with students, it was clear that all ten participants made autonomous decisions about the boundaries of the role and the nature of the interactions and interventions that took place. Whilst this could be viewed as professional autonomy, there was no clear sense of a personal tutoring ethos. This had led to inconsistencies of boundaries and practice not only between different tutors, but also within the practice of some tutors. Tutors with a stronger sense of role boundary tended to be operating strategically in relation to management of their own workload rather than simply a sense of what was appropriate professionally or ethically. Thus the participants who were actively engaged with building their research careers tended to have developed strategies that would allow them to minimize face-to-face interaction with students in order to make space for research activity. It was difficult to draw conclusions about cause and effect on the basis of the reflective workbook study alone. The follow-up questionnaire offered more clarity on this issue. Participants who had complained of being unable to start PhDs because of workload issues, and who had consciously developed stronger role boundaries, found this had facilitated their engagement with doctoral study.

Dialogue, or the lack of it, was consistently found to be a factor in the experiences of personal tutors. There tended to be a relationship between the existence of dialogue or communication between tutors and student services professionals, and a tutor's

willingness to refer or signpost students to these services. Lack of dialogue within programme teams was also an issue. This was part of a wider phenomenon of diminishing collegiality and affected the ability of team members to reach consensus on the ethos of personal tutoring practice. This paucity of collegiality was also instrumental in causing the sense of isolation felt by some tutors, many of whom had little or no opportunity to offload or discuss the more difficult or emotional aspects of their individualized work with students.

This study looked only at the individual perspectives of how tutors experience personal tutoring practice, so it was not possible to draw conclusions about student perspectives. It was, however, possible to identify a perception amongst many participants that the volume of students requesting personal tutorials to discuss personal problems was increasing. It was clear from the context of participants' reflective work, and also from their observations during interview, that there was a tendency for students to approach tutors without previously making an appointment. Whilst some participants had developed strategies to control the level of unplanned interactions, others expressed problematic levels of this type of work. This was analysed using Bauman's postmodern critique of 'instantaneity' whereby individuals desire instant solutions, and the business of life is ephemeral. This compounds notions of inconsistency of practice given the possibility that students may become opportunistic in seeking help from tutors who are more readily available than other tutors, and certainly more instantly available than student services professionals who are protected by an appointment system. It was noted by a number of participants that the key method for reducing the volume of personal tutorials is to be physically absent from the university, and there was evidence that this was increasingly used as a strategy for protecting research time in the workload.

It was noted, without exception, that research outputs are the key to career advancement. Research activity was targeted and monitored; professional

development was offered in the form of mentoring. It was generally felt amongst participants, however, that personal tutoring was not recognized at an institutional level, and was unsupported professionally. In some cases the pull of research was strong enough to displace strongly-held beliefs about the importance of being available to students. As already noted, diminishing collegiality reduced opportunities for dialogue with colleagues. Collegial dialogue could have been harnessed as peer support or development. Professional supervision or line management to address issues of safe and ethical practice was also lacking. This meant that many participants were working with quite complex student problems in a manner that was both unsupported and unchecked. In some cases this was compounded by reluctance to acknowledge openly the stress factors arising out of this type of work for fear of being labelled as inadequate. There was acknowledgement, to various degrees, of the benefits of having taken part in facilitated reflection as participants in the study. The follow-up questionnaire revealed that the consciousness-raising effects had resulted in some lasting changes to individual practice. The contextual issues of institutional policy and practice remained unaltered, however, and most participants had stopped reflecting critically on individual tutorials in the absence of facilitation once their participation in the study had ended.

There is an overarching impression that participants rarely considered their personal tutoring practice in the context of wider social or institutional policy issues. Although there were some exceptions, criticality was largely focused on the micro and meso contexts of their individual situation and the effects of departmental practice respectively. There was no evidence of engagement with higher education literature, so participants were generally unaware of the wider policy and practice debates of personal tutoring.

This chapter will discuss the implications of the data analysis, using the theoretical framework of Goffman, Habermas and Bauman, as outlined in the introduction. The

discussion will also draw on the policy and practice themes arising from the literature in Chapter 2, and will comment on the implications for practice.

Lifeworld and System

The research has illuminated a curious anomaly in relation to activity and output monitoring within higher education institutions. Managerial surveillance and bureaucratic systems appear not to be applied as stringently to the personal tutoring context as to other areas of higher education activity. Where there was some attempt at bureaucracy in the allocation of tutors to students, participants appeared unaware of any attempt to monitor the efficacy of this system. There was some evidence that tutors were aware of the monitoring of student retention rates, and it is likely that intervention from personal tutors will have an effect on this performance indicator, but participants did not perceive that the link had been made in monitoring and recording systems. Smith (2007) has argued that personal tutoring takes place *in camera* because tutors have to carry it out as an extra-curricular activity in addition to their allocated workloads which do not include personal tutoring. Whilst it could be argued that the *laissez-faire* institutional management approach to personal tutoring is indicative of its remaining within the lifeworld, other factors prevent this from being the case. Monitoring systems for research output within institutional systems and outside the institution (at the time the research took place this was the Research Assessment Exercise) had an effect on personal tutoring practice because time and effort allocated to research activity potentially affected the extent to which tutors could engage with supporting students, and with supporting one another. This could be categorized as the lifeworld (the ethical and moral basis of supporting students and supporting colleagues) being invaded by the system (the superseding of this ethical and moral imperative by the performativity culture associated with measured research outputs). There is considerable resonance here with Macfarlane's concept of academic citizenship (2007).

The fact that personal tutoring effectively remains out of sight of the institutional gaze, presents ethical issues of its own. Professional autonomy has traditionally been accompanied by professional regulation based on ethical and moral codes of professional conduct (Johnson, 1972; Holroyd, 2000). If the absence of institutional surveillance had resulted in collegial forms of professional regulation and support such as professionalism (Evans, 2008), or 'practice' (MacIntyre, 2007) there would be a good chance of negotiated consensus within programme delivery teams of an ethical and moral basis, or ethos, to underpin personal tutoring. The manner in which academic staff are managed within institutions prevents this from happening, however. A senior peer method, such as the role for the professoriate advocated by Macfarlane (2007) could facilitate a more collegial approach. The line management systems in place for all participants in the study were configured according to bureaucratic target-setting and appraisal systems that were focused on institutional rather than professional targets. Where meetings with line managers took place, these would be annual, and personal tutoring was not on the agenda. Tutors described how they were reluctant to express to managers concerns about issues such as burnout, or professional development needs in relation to personal tutoring tasks, for fear of appearing weak. This was an unexpected discovery and reinforces further that dialogue and consensus is often absent, not only amongst colleagues but also between academic staff and line managers. So the *laissez-faire* approach and the lack of professional forms of regulation effectively means that institutions have little, if any, idea of what goes on behind the office door of the personal tutor, and unless this becomes an issue of concern for regulatory bodies such as the QAA, the situation is unlikely to change. Ideally institutions might decide to take these issues forward regardless of external monitoring requirements, but the experiences of participants in the study indicate that this would be unlikely.

It is unclear whether institutional managers are aware of and ignore the potential for burnout amongst personal tutors, and for tutors to be engaged in work for which

they are not trained or supported. It could simply be the case that they do not have the professional backgrounds and experience to recognize this. It would appear that the main vehicles for dealing with a situation whereby academic staff begin to display symptoms of burnout are staff counselling services or occupational health referrals, both deficit models which resonate with therapy culture (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009). Professional supervision, whether this occurs via line management (system) or a collegial or mentoring process (lifeworld), is a professional development mechanism designed to prevent or ameliorate burnout, and to support safe, ethical working. Its absence can be seen as an indication that institutions are not exercising an appropriate duty of care towards personal tutors or towards the students who seek their help. In acknowledging that personal tutoring takes place, however, institutions will be opening themselves up to workload allocation issues.

Dramaturgical Imagery

Goffman's idea (1959) was that the front-stage of the organization is where the professional display takes place. The back-stage is where workers can offload, where communication can take place as a form of collective or collegial support, and where genuine thoughts and feelings can be explored. Others have also referred to the role of performance. Hochschild (2003) denotes the professional display rules of emotional labour; Hoyle and Wallace (2007) convey the extent to which academic staff perform compliance with rules and bureaucracy whilst remaining true to their professional, moral and ethical value base. The fact that personal tutoring takes place off-stage and appears not to be the subject of close monitoring means there is no requirement for the strategic display of compliance described by Hoyle and Wallace (2007). Tangible collegial activity could be discerned from five participants in which opportunities existed to discuss practice issues including personal tutoring, and in only one case did a participant describe a socio-political dimension to those discussions. For four participants personal tutoring had become a locus of conflict or resentment because they felt their own practice ethos to be different from

those of their colleagues. Where opportunities for team discussion about practice were limited or did not exist, participants had each developed a discursive relationship with one particular colleague, and this was their primary vehicle for offloading and exploring practice. Some participants also off-loaded to family and friends. This demonstrates that, in the case of this sample of personal tutors, the sense of dualism described by Goffman is likely to exist in most situations. This is clearly a basic need for personal tutors, given that those who do not experience collegial back-stage activity tend to go off-stage and seek it elsewhere. Habermas (1987) argued that private space is the site of individualism, and public space is the site of democratic citizenship. Individualized support mechanisms are taking place in private space because of the failure of collegiality to develop as an act of democratic citizenship. Here again there is resonance with Macfarlane's academic citizenship. Just one participant described a sense of collegiality about personal tutoring that was shared with a range of professionals in student services, as well as fellow academics in the teaching department. This appeared to offer a more holistic service for students, and gave more opportunity for back-stage discussion and offloading. This suggests that if the *dramatis personae* of student support activity were to include a range of professionals in addition to the personal tutor, there might be improvements in the service to students, and more opportunity for professional supervision to take place via collegial rather than managerial processes.

Although personal tutoring largely appeared to be an off-stage activity, most institutions had policies and procedures around a formalized policy for allocation of tutors to students, so in that sense personal tutoring had a front-stage presence given its visible articulation in institutional policy documentation. The reality of practice, however, was considerably different from the policy rhetoric. There was evidence that students sought and received personal tutorials from whichever tutor they wanted. Where there were lists of students allocated officially to personal tutors, these tended not be observed by students or by tutors, most tutors in the study acknowledging that they do not pro-actively contact their tutees. This

indicates that the allocation of official personal tutoring relationships is not working developmentally to ameliorate low level problems, in the manner described by Rana (2005). Instead there is a deficit model whereby personal tutorials take place only on request for students with specific problems. Regular low-level contact with students, and the development of student peer support networks might help to prevent some students from experiencing the rather serious problems some of the research participants had been dealing with.

The pastoral model described in the literature seems to encompass on-going contact between tutor and student and also interaction between students in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). The pastoral model, whilst ideally suited to the Oxbridge context where it was developed, is not fit for answering the needs of the contemporary student population. There was clear evidence of this in Crozier *et al* (1998). Part-time students, or students living at home, make up a significant part of today's diverse student population, and they are unable to benefit from a model designed to meet the needs of medieval students. Most universities in the sample appeared to be operating an amalgam of pastoral and professional models, but the experiences of the personal tutors who took part in this research indicates a need for revision or reform. The integrated curriculum model advocated in the literature goes some way towards developing peer support mechanisms, and tutorials built into the curriculum offer the opportunity for regular tutor-student dialogue. Research participants were universally unaware of the existence of models of personal tutoring, and were consequently unaware of the integrated curriculum model. The integrated curriculum model is a step in the right direction and research has demonstrated its potential benefits, but the fact that it is curriculum-based means it does not address the lack of opportunity for students who live at home to develop friendships organically with students from outside their programme of study. Research (Crozier *et al*, 2008; Holdsworth, 2006) has demonstrated the importance of such friendships as a resource to help students deal with personal difficulties. It would be helpful if models could be developed that offer students

who live at home the opportunities for socializing and developing friendships enjoyed by students who live on-campus or in shared accommodation. This aspiration is unlikely to be achieved if personal tutoring remains out of sight, and if personal tutors remain unaware of the idea that personal tutoring models exist and can be developed to answer specific contextual needs. Dialogue amongst all stakeholders, including institutional managers, students, student services professionals and personal tutors, in the manner described by Humphrys (2005) is more likely to develop models that are fit for purpose

Shared Consensus

One of the most significant findings to emerge from the data has been the diversity amongst participants in relation to the definition of terms. Participants described their views of practice and what they thought a personal tutor should do, but the operational meanings of terms such as caring, nurturing, supporting, counselling and boundaries were not universally understood by all participants. There is work to be done in achieving consensus through dialogue in order to articulate a theory of practice for personal tutors as a stakeholder group in personal tutoring activity. Understanding of the term collegiality in relation to personal tutoring was very much around the idea of colleagues who work as personal tutors supporting one another and developing a sense of collective practice ethos. The institution tended to be demonized as a stakeholder because of people's feelings about unacceptable workload, fear of being judged and lack of professional supervision.

Tutors' descriptions of how students demonstrate assertiveness in order to facilitate their passive and instrumental learning style were noted in the analysis. This, coupled with impatience in the style of Bauman's theory of instantaneity, was likely to be the cause of some students requesting a personal tutorial. This appeared to be a more likely explanation than the 'therapy culture' described by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009). In fact, rather than caricaturing students as diminished and

infantilized, there is an impression that students can be forceful and demanding in their approaches to tutors. This would appear to be a more likely explanation for the increase in student visits to the tutor's office. The best way to discover the student perspective would, of course, be to carry out research with students to discover where they go for support and why. Analysis of tutors' accounts cannot be taken as veracious. The tutors' perceptions and experiences are real, however, and problematize the tutor-student relationship, as does the research critiqued by Baker *et al* (2006a). This is indicative of a lack of shared consensus around the ethos and purpose of the personal tutorial.

Interviews suggested that most tutors saw student services professionals as part of the institution, or the system. Academic developers were not even mentioned because professional development was not in evidence. Looking more closely at the interviews, there is a latent message that three of the participants had well-developed referral mechanisms with student services, which had arisen out of forms of communication. This had led to more of a team approach to dealing with student well-being. The fact that some participants did not engage with student services professionals as part of a team approach to supporting students, meant there was little prospect of developing shared dialogue and consensus such as the model at Leeds (Humphrys, 2005). Research into building more holistic student support models incorporating a range of practitioners would be useful here. Macfarlane's fears (2007) that personal tutoring is being externalized from the role of academic staff could be addressed by ensuring that academics as personal tutors remain central to the support processes. An holistic model would go a long way towards ensuring that personal tutors are not undertaking work (such as mental health support) for which they are untrained. Packages of support could be developed for students who require this, but the emphasis should be on developmental models of self-efficacy rather than the deficit models caricatured as therapy culture by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) and critiqued as therapeutocracy by Criss (1999). A developmental model would have more in common with the understandings of

affective pedagogy as articulated in the literature, whereby students become empowered to deal with their own transformation as they undertake their learning journeys. For this to happen there would need to be a shared sense of personal tutoring ethos amongst stakeholders. This research demonstrated that most tutors were not yet at the point where they could articulate a clear sense of that ethos. Such diversity of opinion is likely to produce an ethos that is perpetually contested amongst academics, as well as other associated professional and occupational groups.

Practice Ethos

The literature suggests that interpersonal and affective pedagogy has been hi-jacked by policy imperatives such as employability and personal development planning, which involve the micro-management of students' career trajectories. There was no evidence of this in participants' accounts of practice. There was generally little awareness of the pedagogical underpinnings of the personal tutorial, no awareness of debates in the higher education literature in relation to tutoring issues, and only a cursory acquaintance with PDP and employability issues. Most personal tutorials took place in an *ad hoc* fashion at the request of the student. The exception was in cases where individual meetings were set up to give results to cohorts of students. This is further evidence that personal tutoring somehow manages to escape the radar of surveillance. It was noted, however, that the amount of personal tutoring taking place is often an important factor in ensuring that students remain on the course. This concurs with Smith (2007) who believes that tutors work off-stage in personal tutorials because they believe it is the right thing to do. Institutions reap the benefit of this unacknowledged emotional labour by achieving good retention and achievement rates. So the ethos is underpinned by tutors' personal positions, and students get tutorial time according to personal, rather than professional parameters. The HEFCE Sustainability Report (2008) boasts of the unique nature of personal contact between tutors and students in UK higher education, but in many

cases this takes place more by good luck than good judgment. Although Crozier *et al* (2008) found that access to personal tutors was likely to be determined by institutional type, with post-92 universities offering the worst service, this study has found that the availability of personal tutorials is vested more in the personal ethos of tutors rather than that of the higher education profession or institutions.

Professional Development and Skills

Low-level developmental work by personal tutors might offer the best prospects of working with students in a developmental rather than a deficit or therapeutic manner, yet there is little evidence that universities are facilitating the professional development required to achieve this. On the rare occasions when personal tutor training was provided, this appeared geared towards dealing with referrals to student services and the manner in which tutors respond to student problems. There was no evidence of tutor awareness that continuous engagement in a learning relationship might offer a more suitable and effective alternative.

Some mention was made in the data of academics not being personally or professionally suitable to work as personal tutors. It was suggested by some participants that perhaps academics could elect to be personal tutors in return for remission from other duties. This idea has some merit, particularly given the development of reward systems that recognize teaching excellence as described in the literature. When analysed within a framework of academic citizenship, however, this model has the potential to externalize the personal tutor role from the main duties of the academic as feared by Macfarlane (2007). If the role of affective pedagogy is recognized alongside the role of developing effective learning relationships between tutor and student, surely this should be seen as the function of all academic staff. Issues may arise with problems that fall outside the remit of academic staff. There is work to be done on agreeing role boundaries as part of the personal tutoring ethos. Ideally such problems would become less common if a

more developmental model were deployed. In cases where problems did arise, a more developed understanding of the role of other professionals within the institution might make this easier for tutors to deal with.

This study has demonstrated that, where personal tutors possess interpersonal skills, these tend to have been acquired outside the institutional context, and have not been developed according to a professional, team or institutional personal tutoring ethos. There is potentially a role for academic developers to work with programme delivery teams on developing the skills and ethos, including collegial support and supervision, required for ethical and effective personal tutoring.

Role of Reflection and Reflective Practice

If facilitated reflective practice were to become embedded in the line management structure of higher education institutions, this presents the risk of instrumental reflection in order to achieve managerial outcomes. Macfarlane's comments (2007) on the emerging dualism of academic leadership, whereby in some cases the professoriate has become disconnected from university decision-making, offers potential for non-managerial mentoring and leadership in the image of professional or non-managerial supervision. Those whom Macfarlane terms manager-professors would perhaps not be the best to perform this function, but his notion of professors modelling fellowship (nurturing colleagues) and guardianship (upholding disciplinary and professional standards whilst encouraging challenges to received wisdom) is perhaps indicative of an ideal type to perform this function. This might involve providing individual professional supervision or convening and facilitating peer supervision, provided this remained separate from target-driven, performance-based managerial supervision.

Reflective practice has its origins in the critical theory of Habermas (1987), Mezirow (1990) and Freire (1970), each of whom advocated its role in raising awareness of the

conditions that may be causing oppression or difficulties. Reflective discussion demonstrated that participants were aware of the institutional issues that had caused them difficulties, and most took action for change as a result. There was little awareness of the socio-political context, and this confirms Bauman's fears that society is becoming increasingly depoliticized, with the emphasis on the individual rather than on the state for overcoming social problems. Reflection and reflective practice discussions need to be underpinned by wider contextual awareness which, on the basis of this study, would need to be introduced by a facilitator, or might occur if reflection took place at a team level. Institutions would need to have a role in allowing the time and space for any form of reflection or reflective practice to take place.

Outcomes from Follow-Up Survey

Appendix 8 summarizes the outcomes for participants of taking part in this reflective study. It seems that all participants have benefited in some way from having had the opportunity to reflect on their practice, and in many cases this has resulted in heightened contextual awareness in relation both to students' needs and to institutional policy imperatives. There have been noteworthy changes in personal tutoring practice, particularly boundary-setting and referral mechanisms. There is evidence that some participants have developed increased confidence in the usefulness of student services professionals, and are more willing to make referrals. Some participants have been reading around the literature related to personal tutoring.

The research imperative continues to predominate in the institutional contexts of all participants, and in some cases stronger boundary-setting and referral mechanisms have arisen out of a need to make space for the range of research and bureaucratic tasks the participants are required to perform. The theme of diminishing resources and the threat to future funding appears to be having an effect upon workloads and

expectations, which for some participants has affected the cultural possibilities of working in a more collegial manner.

Prospects of the creation of spaces for better-developed team and collegial approaches in relation both to time and space in the higher education workplace seem remote, particularly in the current context of financial instability. This is an area of concern given that the literature and the data analysis both pointed to the potential efficacy of a more collegial approach to the development and support of personal tutors.

Chapter 7 Conclusions

This thesis has argued that discursive forms of staff development and more collegial working practices could support personal tutors in developing the practice knowledge required by the critically reflective practitioner. It is envisaged that such knowledge would arise as tutors attempt to understand the situated and contextual nature of their practice through collective and collaborative forms of engagement with theories, context and characteristics of practice. The ability to compare and contrast practice ideas and ethos with those of immediate colleagues and others located elsewhere in the institution is likely to facilitate the kind of reflection that can lead to new insights about personal tutoring and commitments to particular types of practice. These activities can be expressed as communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) or academic citizenship (Macfarlane, 2007). Consensus would be most likely achieved at team or disciplinary level where epistemological connections can be made about the most appropriate forms of engagement with students. This would enable personal tutors to make ethically and pedagogically competent practice decisions which are based on collectively defined 'practice' (MacIntyre, 2007). This would also give personal tutors a collective voice with which to counter attempts by institutions to impose practice methods based purely on managerial or policy imperatives.

Although there has been considerable discussion throughout the thesis of models and approaches to the personal tutoring function and outcomes, there has been no attempt to prescribe the ideal personal tutoring model. The purpose has been to address issues and concerns that have arisen out of facilitated reflection with ten academics who work as personal tutors in order to illuminate and articulate the nature of personal tutoring practice that usually happens behind closed doors. The stated methodological aim was to facilitate the enunciation of the tutor perspective as a stakeholder in the personal tutoring process. This has been worthwhile for two

reasons. The first is the discovery that lack of discourse between practitioners within the institutional context has resulted in problems with shared understanding of terms. The prospects for consensus-building at a local level within institutions would appear to be achievable on the basis that more collegial forms of interaction might be developed. The current funding crisis is likely, however, to exacerbate barriers such as lack of time and physical space for collegial activity, but if this were to be accepted as a worthy aim, it could perhaps be taken account of in working practice within and between teams. There is a potential role for professors and academic developers in facilitating interaction of this nature.

Both literature and data analysis reveal that personal tutoring as a process for supporting the academic and personal development needs of students is no longer fit for purpose. Radical research needs to take place between stakeholders in order to take forward a debate on new and innovative processes for supporting students. This research has demonstrated that the range of stakeholders would need at least to include students, personal tutors and other academic staff, institutional managers and leaders, academic developers and student support professionals. It is clear from the research that more needs to be done on consensus-building to develop a position for personal tutors as a stakeholder group. The prospects for, and appropriateness of, a unified collective position seem remote. There is work to be done, however, on developing some fundamental 'practice' principles from which discipline-specific practice ethos could be developed.

Epilogue

Throughout the period of research I have remained in touch with conferences and debates on personal tutoring in the higher education context. It is heartening that these debates are taking place, but less heartening that it is often the same group of people taking part. It is frequently stated by participants at these events that the messages and discussion really need to be heard by the people who do not attend these conferences. I had not attended conferences or seminars for over a year as I

was concentrating on writing my thesis. On November 16th 2010, I attended a HEA seminar on personal tutoring which included thirty participants from student services and a range of academic disciplines. Four students presented accounts of their own experiences of personal tutoring, and took part in a debate which was made interesting and relevant by the range of stakeholders present. Although the seminar was more useful and appeared to indicate better prospects for change than those I had attended in the past, it was clear that stakeholder groups lacked consensus which meant there was intra-group as well as inter-group debate and discussion, and no clear way forward was identified. I could see that there had been some movement in thinking during my absence from the conference and seminar circuit which was encouraging. Less encouraging were my thoughts that the prospects of motivating colleagues, such as my ten participants, to attend seminars such as this seemed even more remote, especially given the resourcing issues articulated in the follow-up questionnaires.

There are indications, however, that my conference papers and publication (Appendices 6 and 7) have had a lasting effect at an individual level. In November 2010 I received an email from an academic who works as a personal tutor at an English university. She gave me permission to reproduce her email in my thesis, and an extract is included below:

A colleague passed me a copy of your paper 'Emotional support, who offers it and who needs it ? [2008]'. This was following a particularly difficult period for me of supporting a student while being told this was not my role. Your paper has been invaluable in articulating what happened and helping me to recognise that what I was experiencing was valid. I wanted to let you know this.

A participant at the November 16th 2010 HEA seminar approached me to say she had bought a copy of Hochschild's *The Managed Heart* (2003) on the basis of having seen one of my presentations in 2008, and went on to explain how this had changed her thinking about personal tutoring. This reminded me of the feedback I had received at my conference presentations and how much my work appeared to resonate with other academics working as personal tutors.

Whilst I am delighted that my work has had an impact for individual tutors, including my research participants, I retain my stated aim which is to promote debate within the wider academic community that will encourage the discovery and articulation of a tutor perspective (or coherent range of perspectives) on the ethos of personal tutoring. Radical research and debate needs to take place to develop an efficacious system for meeting the range of needs of students in the twenty-first century higher education contexts. All stakeholder positions should be represented, and the tutor perspective cannot be usefully represented unless we come together as academics and state our perspectives. For this to happen, mechanisms must be found to facilitate contributions from typical academics like my ten research participants who taught me so much about the lived experiences of personal tutoring, but who had not previously offered their valuable knowledge at conferences or debates.

Understandably the higher education sector is currently pre-occupied with the threats posed by the funding crisis. There is also concern about the implications of the 'Report of the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance' (Browne, 2010) (The Browne Report). The debate prompted by publication of the Browne Report could be an optimum time for wider debate and discussion about some fundamental issues, including the mechanisms for delivering support to students, but change can be unsettling, and a sector that is feeling under threat is perhaps less likely to consider radical change. Comments from my participants indicate an immediate concern with survival. This may affect the ability to promote debate, but does not make it impossible.

So the end of this thesis marks the beginning of my mission to make a difference by using this research to help promote the debate and discussion that needs to happen. As I write, the HEA has announced a review of its Professional Standards Framework (2006). The Academy states that the time is right (post-Browne) to

address various issues through the development of a new standard on the leadership and management of teaching and learning. Although it is suggested that radical changes to the framework are not necessary, the experiences of my ten participants indicate that the promotion of leadership and management of teaching and learning would be a very radical development indeed. Let us hope that the emphasis will be on leadership.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Coding technique

List of higher level codes

- 1.00 Academic
- 2.00 Institution
- 3.00 Boundaries
- 4.00 Collegiality
- 5.00 Communication
- 6.00 Culture
- 7.00 Personal Tutoring
- 8.00 Reflection
- 9.00 Research
- 10.00 Skills
- 11.00 Staff development
- 12.00 Students
- 13.00 Time and Task
- 14.00 Student Problems
- 15.00 Tutor
- 16.00 Interaction and Intervention

Each category had between six and thirty-four sub codes, developed sequentially and inductively, which were used to annotate each interview transcript and identify narrative for citation. These were subsequently consolidated into the broader themes within which the data are presented and analysed in Chapter 5.

Appendix 2: Participant Details and Profiles

Brief details of the sample composition

	Male	Female	Total
Age range			
30-39	3	2	5
40-49	2	2	4
50-59	1	0	1
Total	6	4	10

Participants by age and sex

Institution type	Male	Female	Total
Post 1992	0	3	3
1960s	3	0	3
Russell Gp	1	1	2
HE in FE	1	0	1
Mixed	1	0	1
Total	6	4	10

Participants by sex and institution type

Brief profiles of the ten participants by pseudonym. Minor changes have been made to protect anonymity.

1. **Dylan** *1960s university*. Second career academic, male, forties, teaches on programmes which are professionally accredited by the community-related profession in which he had his previous career. Time working in HE – 4 years in lecturing role, having worked as a visiting lecturer for several years before. Administrative role: Programme Director. Research status – Early career researcher. Currently enrolled on PhD.
2. **Erica** *Russell Group university*. Career academic, female, thirties, teaches on social science based programmes related to her subject area of economics. Time working in HE – 15 years, employed initially as a researcher then moving into lecturer role. Administrative role: Programme Director. Research status - Research active and published. Achieved PhD several years ago.
3. **Martin** *HE in FE*. Second career academic, male, forties, teaches on programmes which are professionally accredited by the community-related profession in which he had his previous career. Time working in HE : 3 years in lecturer role, having also had some temporary lecturing experience at a college of higher education. Administrative role: Programme Director. Research status – minor involvement with research but has ambitions to become research active. No plans for doctoral research.
4. **Danielle** *Post-1992 university*. Career academic, female, thirties, teaches on a psychology programme. Time working in HE: 6 years, employed in lecturer role. Administrative role: Year Tutor. Research status :Research active and published. Achieved PhD.
5. **Ann-Marie** *Post-1992 university*. Second career academic, having previously worked in a range of education-related professions and as a lecturer in FE. Female, forties, teaches on an education-related programme. Time working in HE: 3 years employed in lecturer role. Administrative role: Programme Director. Research status: minor involvement with research, would like to enrol for PhD.

6. **Phil** *Russell Group university*. Career academic, male fifties, social scientist currently teaching on a professionally accredited medical programme. Time working in HE: 30 years, employed in lecturer role. Administrative role: former Programme Director. Research status: Research-active and published.
7. **Will** *1960s university*. Second career academic, management specialist currently teaching on management-related programmes after a short career in management. Male, thirties. Time working in HE: 2 years, employed in lecturer role. Administrative role: none. Research status: Research-active and published. Achieved PhD.
8. **Mark** *Works across 3 HEIs, 1960s university; Post-1992 ; and Russell Group*. Career academic, male, thirties humanities specialist, currently teaching part time at a number of universities, teaching traditional and distance learning students. Time working in HE: 3 years, lecturing role. Administrative role: none. Research status: Research active and published. Currently enrolled on PhD.
9. **Alex** *1960s university*. Second career academic, having previously worked in an education-related profession. Dual employment status as student services employee and lecturing role. Male, thirties. Time working in HE: 4 years. Administrative role: none. Research status: Early career researcher. Currently enrolled on PhD.
10. **Angela** *Post-1992 university*. Second career academic, teaching on a professionally accredited health science-related programme in the professional area where she had her first career. Female, forties. Time working in HE 3 years in lecturing role. Administrative role: Programme Director. Research status: Minor involvement with research. Would like to enrol for PhD.

Appendix 3: Reflective Workbook

Thank you very much indeed for agreeing to take part in my research project.

1. Context:

Arlie Hochschild's framework for analysis (*The Managed Heart, 2003*) encouraged me to explore the hidden networks of emotion work amongst higher education lecturers. I bring to my work as a lecturer and researcher, many years of experience as a counsellor in a range of contexts and as a former manager of support services for women, young people and children. My prior experience enabled me to notice and begin to explore some of the emotion work scenarios in higher education, and I became concerned about the need to support lecturers in this area. I became interested in the extent to which lecturers are engaged in emotional labour or emotion work after noticing the extent to which colleagues in my own institution and elsewhere were experiencing encounters with distressed students.

I am interested in exploring with you the emotional content of your interactions with students (not necessarily distressed students) and how you feel you could be usefully supported in this work.

2. Methods:

Briefly, I would like you to complete the attached Reflective Workbook and then meet with me to discuss your reflections in more detail.

I would like you to use the workbook to keep reflective journals to be completed as soon as possible after a support session with a student. The term 'support session' can be interpreted broadly according to your own context. Lecturers who took part in a pilot study used both face-to-face and email contact for the topic of their reflections. You can use any supportive interaction with a student that applies in your context. This might include telephone calls as well as face-to-face and email, or any other situation where you have given support (whilst I can't think of any examples I am sure there will be a range of occasions, often impromptu, that you might find suitable for reflection).

Please document feelings and perspectives as soon as possible after you have undertaken a support session with a student. Ideally I would like you to complete 5 reflections over the period of the study, but if you don't have the material for this then we could proceed with fewer.

As you know I will be coming to meet with you at an agreed time in order to discuss your reflections. I need you to complete the workbook and send it to me first so we have an opportunity to reflect together on your documented feelings and perspectives. I must emphasize to you again that it is not my intention to judge or assess the work you have done. Some of the lecturers in

the pilot study said they felt a bit vulnerable about some of the feelings they had documented, but I was able to assure them that I have had similar thoughts about my own practice. Whilst bearing in mind that the data we produce is for my thesis, and therefore I am in the role of facilitator/researcher, I am interested in exploring your reflections as a fellow practitioner and it is likely that some of your scenarios will be familiar to me from my own practice.

To try to avoid overwhelming you with the task of producing reflective journals, the workbook contains prompt sheets that give the opportunity to frame and limit the extent of the reflective work involved. You can, of course, write as much or as little as you feel necessary. The purpose of the prompt sheets is to produce brief data that helps you to recall thoughts and feelings at the time of the interaction, which will help you to focus more accurately during our meeting on how you felt at the time of your student support session. I am sure we all realise that the passage of time can sometimes desensitize us from the issues we felt 'in the moment'.

3. Confidentiality/Anonymity:

All data will be reproduced anonymously. Whilst your responses will not be confidential as such (in that they will be reported anonymously in my thesis and associated papers submitted to academic journals) they will be written in such a way that you cannot be identified. I will be using participant validation to check with you (probably via email) that you agree the data is an accurate report of what you said or wrote. I will also check with you that neither you nor anyone else can be identified by anything I have written. This is a very important principle of my work, and is part of me treating you with respect as a participant in my research.

4. Meetings:

If I have not already agreed a date and time for our meeting, then I will be doing so very soon. All I ask is that we have a private room without interruption for an interview I anticipate will last not much more than one hour.

If we subsequently need to discuss anything else that cannot be dealt with via phone or email, I will be happy to come and meet with you again but I expect in most cases that we will just need the one meeting.

5. Your Valuable Contribution

I feel I need to acknowledge the fact that you are giving your time and effort to take part in this study, and I would like to say that in doing so you will be making a big contribution to making my research effective and appropriate in drawing attention to the emotion work we all undertake as lecturers. I hope that the outcomes of the research project will go some way to explaining to

our institutions the reasons why they should acknowledge and support the work that we do.

Lecturers taking part in the pilot found the process useful in helping to reflect on the practice of supporting students, and to highlight areas they would like to improve.

Thank you again for agreeing to take part, and I look forward to receiving your contribution.

Jan Huyton

Student Support Survey (academic staff)

Reflective Workbook

Interaction 1/2/3/4/5

Student Code.....

Was the interaction planned/unplanned?

Date of interaction.....

Q1 What were you doing immediately prior to the interaction?

Q2 How would you describe your feelings and emotions immediately beforehand?

Q3 Brief description of interaction with student (including any skills or experience you were able to draw on)

Q4 How would you describe your feelings and emotions during the interaction?

Q5 How did you feel immediately after the interaction?

Q6 What did you do immediately after the interaction?

Q7 Did you feel you needed support or debriefing after the interaction?

Q8 How did you feel about your performance?

Please feel free to add any additional or subsequent reflections

Student Code:.....

Date:.....

Student Code:.....

Date:.....

Appendix 4: Information for Participants

Briefing for Potential Participants

Thank you for expressing an interest in participating in my research. Before agreeing to participation, I want to offer you the chance to consider the requirements and implications of participation.

Reflection

In order to participate fully in the research, it will be necessary for you complete the attached reflective workbook, in which I would require you to reflect on at least five 'critical incidents' in which you have engaged in a student support activity. In individual interviews I will use these reflections as a basis for exploring how you have interpreted your experience, so it is really quite important that you are comfortable with the idea of reflecting on your own practice both verbally and in writing.

Potential for Distress

Many research participants (myself included) have experienced various degrees of distress, ranging from mild upset to significant emotional response, as a result of reflecting on their own practice. My research question recognizes and seeks to explore the emotional content of the work we undertake in supporting students. I would like to discuss with you how you feel about the likelihood of experiencing distress as a result of participation, and whether you feel you have appropriate support mechanisms in place to deal with any anticipated feelings that might occur.

Limitations of the Research

Participants in similar research I have undertaken in the past, have told me they found the process therapeutic. That is to say they found it beneficial to be able to talk about and explore their thoughts and feelings, and the research had given them the opportunity to do so. Whilst it is valuable and appropriate for participants to find the process therapeutic, it is important for me to emphasize that participation should not be seen as a form of therapy. If you are experiencing workplace-related problems associated with student support activity, I would find it helpful to explore these issues with you. The interviews are not designed to be therapy sessions however, and I plan to manage the interviews in order to ensure they remain appropriate in nature and context.

Pre-participation discussion

If you are still interested in taking part in the research, I would like to discuss this with you to ensure we have a good understanding about what the research entails and what its limitations are.

I will telephone at a time that's convenient for you, and I hope you will use this as an opportunity to ask any questions about participating in the study.

If, after our discussion, you go ahead as a participant in the study, I will ask you to read and sign a consent form that gives important details about the nature of the study, and issues such as data storage and confidentiality.

Purpose of Research

The research is being conducted for my EdD thesis at Moray House School of Education, Edinburgh University and data may also be used in papers for submission to academic journals.

Yours Sincerely

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Edinburgh University

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Appendix 5: Consent Form

Participant Consent Form (to be read in conjunction with Reflective Workbook and Briefing for Potential Participants)

I agree to take part in Jan Huyton's research project on Emotion Work and Student Support.

I confirm that I have read the Reflective Workbook and Briefing for Participants and have had a discussion with Jan Huyton about the role and limitations of the project.

I understand that any data from my participation may be reproduced in Jan Huyton's thesis and/or in any papers submitted for publication in academic journals. I understand this reproduced data will be sufficiently anonymous to ensure that it will not be possible for any individual to be identified.

Signed:

Print name:

Date of signing:

ends

Appendix 6: Paper published in Journal for Learning Development in Higher Education

Appendix 7: Selected Conference Papers

Title: 'Doing the Right Thing?' Experiences and development needs of academics in student support interactions.

SerialNo. 0180

Summary:

This paper presents some of the data emerging from an on-going study into the experiences of academic staff in student support or personal tutoring interactions with individual students. The on-going study uses an emotional labour framework (Hochschild, 2003) as a tool for analysis. Alternative themes have begun to emerge which might usefully be explored using the idea of 'the academic citizen' and the 'service role' (Macfarlane, 2007). This paper begins to interrogate the data using Macfarlane (2007) as a means of explaining the continued motivation of academic staff (tutors) to support students, despite an apparent failure of employing institutions to exercise a duty of care towards staff in the form of training and support. The 'service role' idea is used to illustrate potential tensions between the research role and the student support role, and there is a call for institutions to acknowledge and address these matters.

Introduction

This paper presents outcomes of ongoing research which explores the emotion work experiences of academic staff. The study is contextualised in personal tutoring or other forms of supportive interactions with individual students in higher education settings. Data were gathered from 101 responses to an electronic survey circulated via a wide range of higher education institutions and networks. The study has generated interest amongst academic staff, academic developers and learning support professionals who have an interest in developing the quality of student support and the context in which it is delivered. The data contribute to a larger work in progress, which develops a critical realist framework for analysing the roles of institutions in developing skills and support mechanisms for academic staff carrying out student support work.

Analysis of the work in progress has been influenced by Hochschild (2003) who purports that there are three separate discourses relating to the costs and benefits of managing emotion in private life and at work. These discourses centre on the nature of labouring that deploys interpersonal skills, rules around display of feeling, and the act of managing emotion. According to Hochschild (2003: 89), our capacity for empathy and warmth can be put to corporate use when organisational managers set rules about how to feel and how to express feeling. Prolonged deployment of emotional labour can lead to a form of *emotive dissonance* whereby we can become estranged from our own genuine feelings. If this phenomenon were to be experienced by academic staff, it might affect our ability to feel genuine warmth and care towards students. Hochschild's empirical work is largely focused on flight attendants working for a commercial airline, which might make us question its transferability to the higher education workplace.

Ogbonna and Harris (2004) conducted interviews with UK higher education lecturers and discovered evidence of emotional labouring with effects that resonate with Hochschild's findings. In some cases this appears to have affected lecturers' motivation to support students, and the study uncovered situations in which lecturers described 'faking it' as a mechanism for coping with the emotional demands of the role:

'I don't think it's feasible for us to care about every single student...it's a miracle if I can remember what degree they're doing. Pretending to remember their problems and faking concern is just a coping response,' (Lecturer, new university, aged 39).

'It's about image – creating a brand of "me"...I have no problem with faking concern about students if it gets me another increment [point].' (Lecturer, new university, aged 27).

(Ogbonna and Harris, 2004: 1197).

Interpretation of my own data revealed that most academic staff in the sample remained motivated in their role of supporting students. This motivation was articulated by many survey respondents despite their experiences of insufficient support or training and unsatisfactory relationships with line managers and some colleagues- factors which might be considered to be 'dissatisfiers' likely to have a negative affect on motivation to work (Hertzberg *et al*, 1993). Macfarlane's notion of 'the academic citizen' (2007) will be considered as a possible means by which this phenomenon can be analysed.

Electronic Survey Findings

The survey was designed to collect data pertaining to emotion work in support sessions with individual students, so its essence lies in individual acts of emotion work. Unlike Hochschild's emotion work or emotional labour, which was characterised by closely managed corporate display rules for interactions in public space, the electronic survey findings describe work that is usually invisible to others, carried

out in private space. Many respondents felt this work was viewed by institutions, and by some colleagues, as somehow peripheral to the more public acts of learning and teaching activity and publication of research. Many respondents were reporting consequent difficulties arising out of inadequate training and support offered by institutions. There was evidence that tutors were finding ways of accessing essential skills and support mechanisms for effective ethical performance by drawing on resources outside the institutional framework. 83 respondents answered a question about incidents or periods of time when they had felt the need for more support such as debriefing, offloading, or professional supervision to support their individual tutorial work with students. One respondent thought it unlikely that anyone would answer 'no' to this question. In fact 30 % answered 'no', indicating that problematic scenarios, although in the majority, were by no means universally experienced. Of the 70 percent who had felt the need for more support, 49 respondents gave more specific details on the nature of the problems the students had brought to them. The vast majority related to issues from the students' personal lives, with a small number being related to study support such as specific skills or engagement issues. Of the personal issues, those coming under a broad category of mental health were in the majority. Other categories included physical illness; suicide/suicidal thoughts; bereavement; and a range of physical abuse or assault scenarios.

Of 84 responses to a question about resources available when dealing with difficult student support scenarios, sources of support varied considerably. By far the most frequent response was that colleagues would usually be drawn on for support at difficult times (32 responses). 26 respondents drew on pre-existing experiences and skills - these responses tended to be from tutors having entered the higher education profession from previous professional backgrounds in which interpersonal, communication and support skills were a major focus of the job, but no attempts had been made by institutions to develop these skills in the higher education context. The table below demonstrates the extent to which tutors drew on their own support mechanisms developed informally outside the institutional framework.

Provided by institution mechanisms		Individual's own support	
Line manager	11	Colleagues	32
Professional Supervision	10	Professional Supervision	3
		Friends	7
		Family	10
		Own skills & experience	26
Total	21	Total	78

Table 1: Sources of support used by tutors in connection with individual student support activity

So far the findings have indicated strong evidence of emotion work undertaken regularly by tutors working in student support contexts, demonstrated by descriptive data suggestive of willingness to work with students on emotional issues that affect their academic progress. Tutors have felt the need for more support and training in a number of scenarios which include issues related to study as well as physical or mental health. Support systems for tutors appear to be underdeveloped at an institutional level, causing dissatisfaction and in some cases distress, yet there was no evidence, in accounts of student support work, of the 'faking it' mechanisms discovered in Ogbonna and Harris's sample. This is likely to be attributable to the nature of my sample which consisted almost exclusively of tutors who expressed an understanding of the role of the role of student support as an essential strand of higher education pedagogy.

Dissatisfaction was expressed in a range of ways in the electronic survey, two respondents explicitly stating that it was the workload rather than the nature of student support needs that was at the root of their need for support from the institution:

I feel I could support students' needs adequately if there were less students to support as a personal tutor. The nature of the course is such that it attracts a particular type of student who requires more support than usual, particularly pastoral care. ... I feel I could do with some kind of training regarding respecting boundaries and dealing with conflict. This might enable me to ration out the time given to students more effectively.

Time to do the job properly Awareness raising training - for other personal tutors too

There were other more narrative responses describing specific scenarios in which issues of excessive workload might have been implied, but the anonymous nature of the survey means this cannot be verified. Emerging data collected via a companion project using interviews and reflective journals with higher education tutors indicates that workload issues and work role or task conflict can have a detrimental effect on a tutor's ability to deal effectively with student support scenarios. In such instances tutors report performing according to professional display rules which tended to involve mustering the energy and skills to display appropriate behaviour in a meeting or a lecture, despite feeling emotionally depleted following a difficult interaction with a student. This resonates with Ogbonna and Harris's findings (2004: 1185) which argued that 'the increase in emotional labouring is largely a result of the heightened intensification of the academic labour process, which is exacerbated by the multiple and sometimes conflicting demands of various stakeholders.'

Returning to my own survey, 32 respondents detailed specific areas in which more skills or support were needed, and the following table details the responses.

Table 2:

Area of support	Number of responses
Information and resources for referral	8
Professional supervision	6
Time/workload issues	4
Counselling skills	5
Counselling for staff	3
Study skills/learning strategies	3
Discussion forum/information exchange	1
Designated CPD programmes	1
General personal tutoring training	1
Total	32

Only two *per cent* of respondents had been unwilling to take on the student support role. 17 % had been agreeable with some reservations, and the remaining 81 % had been happy to take on the role. Eight respondents reported having had reservations about taking on the role because of lack of preparation and training. Other concerns were time factors including the effects of managerial and bureaucratic demands; extent of student dependency on personal tutors; and becoming known as 'the one to go to'. By far the majority of respondents had been happy to take on the student support role, and 67 of these stated the reasons behind this. 37 felt that student support was integral to the function of a member of academic staff. One respondent had been extrinsically motivated to support students by the offer of a financial incentive, whilst the remaining 36 described intrinsic motivational factors. Of those, 14 felt that supporting students was as important as other aspects of learning and teaching, and

19 gave answers that indicated a sense of belief in the importance of supporting students, one respondent describing this as a passion. Two respondents had developed a sense of the importance of student support as a result of their own good experiences as students. Only six *per cent* had been in post as tutors for one year or less, with 75 % having been in post five years or more, so responses are likely to be grounded in experience of the higher education workplace.

The notion of 'the academic citizen' (Macfarlane, 2007) presents possibilities for locating the source of this motivation. Macfarlane describes a 'service' role that goes beyond researching and teaching in the context of an academic discipline. Such a role includes 'counselling students', and 'mentoring colleagues'. Macfarlane argues that such tasks have been trivialised or overlooked by institutions, and this resonates with the feelings and experiences of many electronic survey respondents. Many considered that their perception of the central importance of the student support role was not shared by their employing institutions. This was demonstrated by the fact that only ten *per cent* of respondents felt they had received comprehensive and adequate training for the student support role. 30% reported having had little training or no training at all. Whilst this is a cause for concern, it is likely to be particularly problematic for tutors who do not have background skills and experiences on which to draw. The following responses are indicative of tutors in this situation:

If we do not know the procedure, how do we know if we have done it right (or stop the worry of doing something wrong!).

I am an academic, intense personal issues, including being mugged, having prolonged medical issues, unwanted pregnancy and autism/aspergers, are difficult to deal with essentially untrained.

The system was hurriedly put in place with no prior consultation with staff and no clear model of operation.

Yet despite a number of responses of this nature, the overwhelming message appeared to be that tutors wanted to 'do the right thing' in supporting students or referring them for appropriate support, despite some tutors having had to struggle to know what 'the right thing' consists of.

Taken in the context of Macfarlane's 'academic citizen' proposition, we might consider this as evidence of a 'service role' or certainly recognition of a 'social and moral responsibility' to support students. Yet some felt that by choosing to engage with the student support process they were taking on extra workload compared with some colleagues. This situation arose because some colleagues appeared not to have developed an ethical or professional understanding of this aspect of the 'service role'. Institutional systems enabled such colleagues to avoid supporting students simply by choosing not to engage with the process. There was a feeling that some colleagues would manage to avoid the student support scenario by developing a reputation for doing it badly, or simply by absenting themselves from their office. There was also resentment that student support avoidance enabled colleagues to work on research-related tasks. Some participants felt that they had taken on extra student support because they were known to be approachable, and this had been at the expense of their own research work. It could perhaps be argued that those engaging with the 'service role' of supporting students are effectively propping up the research capabilities of some staff.

(Ogbonna and Harris (2004: 1193) found data on a similar theme, but from the perspective of the tutor who is attempting to get on with research:

'It can drive you to the point of screaming. You're in your little "haven of peace" really getting into a paper and just when you're relaxed into that mindset there comes the little knock, knock, knock on the door. You then spend twenty minutes smiling and charming some kid feeling homesick when inside you're screaming "Just f**k

off and leave me in peace!” (Lecturer, old university, aged 31)

There is a danger that data presented in this way, out of its original context’ could be seen as an attempt to demonise tutors who find student support problematic. My intention is to illustrate the tension between the two activities of research and student support in an attempt to raise awareness that institutions may need to acknowledge and address this.

‘Mentoring colleagues’ is another feature of Macfarlane’s ‘service role’ and was touched on in my electronic survey data. Tutors frequently reported instances when they would turn to colleagues for support at difficult times, and where this type of supportive relationship existed it appeared to be largely satisfactory, perhaps indicating a shared sense of ‘service role’ in relationships with colleagues. As Table 1 demonstrates, there were only 21 instances of support being offered via institutional mechanisms such as line managers or professional supervision. Whilst we might consider peer support amongst colleagues as a valuable resource, this form of support, alongside the many other forms of support accessed informally from outside the institution, are effectively propping up the student support function utilising unpaid and untrained labour. Whilst immediate colleagues were routinely used for support, a small number of survey responses also indicated satisfactory support had been received from student support services at the centre of the institution, again via informal rather than formalised support mechanisms. Not all respondents were able to access support from colleagues, and some reported requesting support from student services or line managers which was subsequently refused:

I once tried to get [counselling] from student services but (no surprises, eh?) it is only available for students. Staff have no problems? Or it isn’t worth investing in supporting staff?

An incident involving a student disclosure of suicide arose and I was refused supervision by my line manager.

There have been other studies (for example Easton and Van Laar, 1995; Owen, 2002) that have uncovered similar findings in relation to the need for training and support to be provided for tutors working with distressed students, so this is a long-standing issue which, according to my survey data, remains unaddressed. Again my purpose here is to raise awareness amongst institutions that they have a duty to ensure their tutors are working safely and ethically in student support roles.

Summary and conclusions

Macfarlane’s work on ‘the academic citizen’ and the ‘service role’ has offered a useful framework for analysing data emerging from my on-going study. The sense of moral duty is likely to have influenced the way in which the ‘academic citizens’ in my study have embraced and continued with supporting students, despite some challenging organisational ‘dissatisfiers’. Macfarlane also notes that ‘academic citizens’ are more likely to take part in committee work and mentoring colleagues, which could be the underpinning motivation that encouraged tutors to take part in my survey, helping a fellow academic and making a contribution to research that aims to improve the context in which student support is delivered.

The notion of ‘the academic citizen’ has been helpful in sensitising me to some common characteristics of tutors taking part in my study. It has also made a contribution to theorising the motivation to support, and the unacknowledged consequences of ‘academic citizenship’ which institutions have a duty to address. Hochschild’s emotional labour and emotion work theories continue to present a relevant analytical framework for my data. Macfarlane’s ‘academic citizen’ and ‘service role’ add an additional dimension that is helpful in contextualising the analysis to the academic workplace and culture.

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A Question of Time? Perceptions of change in the volume and intensity of student support needs

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Introduction

Claims that 'widening participation' has resulted in a significant change in the nature and volume of student support needs may be well-founded, but the manner in which this phenomenon is expressed might imply a deficit model for some students, indicating a largely remedial approach (Earwaker, 1992; Marr and Aynsley-Smith, 2006). Ecclestone (2004: 118) expresses concern that the effects of 'therapeutic pedagogy' can mean students from 'marginalised' or 'disaffected' groups in society will be categorized as 'unable to cope without support'. An over-emphasis on the individual runs the risk of overlooking social and institutional dimensions of identifying and addressing student support needs.

This paper refers to data from studies that identify the nature of student support work from the perspectives of UK higher education tutors, and includes data from my on-going doctoral research. My own sample of 101 electronic survey respondents consisted almost exclusively of tutors who expressed an understanding of the role of student support as an essential strand of higher education pedagogy. Yet the data also indicate problems with workload allocation, and lack of training and support from institutions. This resonates with earlier studies and suggests these matters remain largely unaddressed. I suggest that perceptions of change in the nature of student support needs might be located in the fact that there has not been the increase in appropriate resources required to respond to increased participation rates (Macfarlane, 2004).

I also suggest that models of student support and personal tutoring may have been inappropriately framed in an individualised model that overlooks the potential role of peer or collective support models. Data emerging from my doctoral research have previously been analysed using an emotional labour/emotion work framework. This paper presents an initial experimental attempt to analyse the data using a model of individualisation (Bauman, 1994; 2000; 2005) and liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000; 2005) in order to search for alternative explanations to the implied deficit model and to explore the relevance of the notion of therapeutic pedagogy. The issues of workload and of individualisation are not unrelated, and we should look to our institutions for resources to address tutor workload intensification, staff development needs, and more empowering models of student support, instead of labelling our students, and in some cases our tutors, as exceptionally needy individuals.

The paper is divided into five sections. It begins by presenting some data from an electronic survey which forms part of my on-going doctoral research. The theme of workload intensification is taken forward from my own data and the work of others. This is followed by a brief exploration of themes associated with notions of 'supercomplexity' (Barnett, 2000) and 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000; 2005), and goes on to consider the effect of public, collective and private spaces in the student support scenario. The paper concludes with some thoughts on 'a question of time'.

Electronic Survey Data

Many respondents felt that student support work is viewed by institutions, and by some colleagues, as a peripheral activity which often goes unrecognised and unsupported. There were reports of difficulties arising out of insufficient or inadequate training and support offered by institutions, relating in particular to essential skills and support mechanisms for effective and ethical performance. Of the 83

respondents who answered a question about provision of support by institutions, 70 % had experienced a need for more support, and 49 respondents gave more specific details on the nature of the problems the students had brought to them. The vast majority related to issues from the students' personal lives, a smaller number being related to study support for students. Of the personal issues, those coming under a broad category of mental health were in the majority. Other categories included physical illness; suicide/suicidal thoughts; bereavement; and a range of physical abuse or assault scenarios. Only 10% of all respondents felt they had received comprehensive and adequate training for the student support role. The most frequent experience was one of limited training with needs largely met (38%). 30% had received no training at all, or extremely limited and inadequate training.

The survey was designed specifically to document one-to-one engagement between tutors and students in individualised supportive encounters, so the data reflect that specific scenario. Nevertheless the majority of tutors were working with student support models that privileged the individual over the collective, support for individual students largely being available from academic staff working as personal tutors, programme directors or module leaders, or from individual specialists located at the centre of institutions such as mental health advisors, counsellors or learning support advisors.

These findings appear to confirm the continued existence of similar scenarios in the higher education workplace dating back to the early 1990s (Earwaker, 1992; Easton and Van Laar, 1995; Owen, 2002; Ogbonna and Harris, 2004), and also resonate with experiences of academic advisors in the USA (Habley, 2000). It is in the more recently published work (Owen, 2002; Ogbonna and Harris, 2004) and my own on-going study that the issue of workload intensification begins to emerge more strongly as a cause for concern amongst tutors.

Workload Intensification

There were narrative responses to my electronic survey, describing specific scenarios in which issues of excessive workload had become problematic. Emerging data collected via a companion project using interviews and reflective journals with higher education tutors indicates that workload issues and conflicts between work roles or tasks can have a detrimental effect on a tutor's ability to deal effectively with individual student support scenarios. There were occasions when this had been the case for tutors who were highly skilled and experienced in psychotherapy and associated professional boundaries, so the phenomenon was not exclusively experienced by those who considered themselves insufficiently prepared for a student support role. In such instances tutors reported performing according to professional display rules which tended to involve mustering the energy and skills to display appropriate behaviour in a meeting or a lecture, despite feeling emotionally depleted following a difficult interaction with a student. Other comments related to the pressures of working with large numbers of students in need of support, and the associated detrimental effects on the tutor and the quality of his or her support work. The following comment is indicative of a number of survey responses which make explicit reference to the role of workload:

I feel I could support students' needs adequately if there were less students to support as a personal tutor... I feel I could do with some kind of training regarding respecting boundaries and dealing with conflict. This might enable me to ration out the time given to students more effectively.

It would be logical to assume that an increase in student numbers will be accompanied by a commensurate increase in the number of students experiencing difficulties relating to issues such as mental health, relationships, identity, finance, and specific study-related issues. Owen (2002), when describing the policy context of her study into personal tutoring models, refers to the content of the 1996 Higher Education Quality Council publication which reports on the considerable strain experienced by personal tutors working with an increase in student numbers and the increasing diversity of the student population. Owen also cites the 1997 Dearing Report which comments specifically on the increasing numbers of women, mature learners and part time learners making up the student population. Macfarlane (2004: 10) suggests that students are no longer 'a small, socially

homogenous elite' and that many students now come to university with 'pragmatic, rather than idealistic, goals', motivated more by career aspirations than a passion for the subject. Whilst I would not necessarily make the inference that a student who is pragmatic and career-focused cannot also be passionate about their learning, I would suggest that diversity in relation both to the range of social groups and the range of professional/vocational learners has resulted in increased numbers of students for whom the university has become both educator and mentor. I am referring to students who do not have family or community-based reference points or role models on which to draw for support; students who are the first in the family or the community to engage with higher education. This does not necessarily make them needy learners or needy individuals, but does imply the need for an additional student support role that acknowledges 'the affective dimensions of learning' (Beard *et al*, 2007: 235).

Students in the study conducted by Beard *et al* described an emotional journey that affected all aspects of their lives. Increasing numbers of learners who do not have community or family-based mentors are likely to seek support in this journey from university-based tutors, some of who may be unprepared, in terms of time and space or skills and experience, for taking on this role. This is perhaps a controversial claim to make, particularly when taking account of research findings which indicate that many lecturers believe strongly that the skills of being able to relate well to people, and therefore become a good personal tutor, are embedded in the skills of teaching (Owen, 2002). I refer, however, to my own findings which demonstrate high levels dissatisfaction amongst tutors with their own preparedness for the student support role.

Supercomplexity and liquidity: the effect on our students and tutors

Barnett (2000) is well-known in higher education research communities for his proposition that we must now be concerned to take account of the world of supercomplexity for which we are preparing our students. In a scenario resonant with Bauman, Barnett (2000: 6) describes how professional life is now 'a matter of handling multiple frameworks of understanding, of action and of self-identity. The fundamental frameworks by which we might understand the world are multiplying and are often in conflict.' Barnett indicates a role for universities in enabling students to develop their own sense of identity and voice. He indicates the need to move much further from a transmission model of education – a shift into more discursive teaching that includes both the personal and the interpersonal. Barnett's proposition is suggestive of a form of learning that enables students to develop and practice skills and resourcefulness in negotiating their way through supercomplexity. I would argue that this can be achieved by facilitating collective learning space through which students can develop productive peer relationships. Bauman (2000: 7-8) problematizes 'an individualized, privatized version of modernity, with the burden of pattern-weaving and the responsibility for failure falling primarily on the individual's shoulders'. A shift towards active, collective learning space might enable students to find security and safety amongst their peers, and this idea is taken forward in the next section.

Private space, public troubles?

Using Bauman's analysis of liquid modernity (2000) and liquid life (2005), I suggest that we are not necessarily working with a pronounced change in student support needs associated with particular social groups. I propose that the boundaries between public and private domains have become fluid, resulting in a more visible discussion of student support interactions. My exploration follows Bauman's (1994:22) proposition that human life has become a privatised existence of individualisation, one in which we are 'sharing space, but not thoughts or sentiments'. Bauman suggests a decline in the collective spaces, both spatial and discursive, within which individuals might once have found security or safety. Seemingly, unhappy individuals seldom find areas of commonality with others, and continue to seek their own individualised remedies. This exposes a process of individualisation whereby students retreat to the privatised space of the personal tutorial to seek support, or remedies, for personal difficulties. Yet this process of privatised individualisation has also caused the nature and volume of student problems to become the subject of collective debate, albeit in an anonymous form, via studies such as those referred to in this paper, and more particularly in studies that explore support needs from the student perspective. Encounters that take place in private space have, through

research into practice, become public knowledge. They have not, however, become public troubles, because they remain framed within individualised support models which can have a tendency to overlook social, political and structural factors, and institutional responsibilities.

Concluding thoughts

This paper is entitled 'a question of time?' and I wish to take this theme forward in three ways:

Living in a 'liquid modern' time

I have used the work of Bauman and Barnett to explore the idea that students and tutors coexist in increasingly complex times in which the nature of understanding, action and identity are changing rapidly. Barnett suggests the need to move towards a more empowering model of student learning, one in which students are able to demonstrate personal and interpersonal resourcefulness. Bauman indicates his belief that we have, instead, moved towards a more individualised rather than collective model, and this resonates with Ecclestone's concerns about therapeutic pedagogy. Such a model shifts responsibility from society to the individual, from the institution to the individual staff and students within it.

Individualised or collective time and space?

I have suggested that the 'widening access' agenda and the associated diversity of the student population has not necessarily brought us more needy learners. Instead I argue that we now have increasing numbers of learners who do not have access to mentors or role models in the family or community. Consequently the university is the only source of mentoring and support. The prevalence of personal tutoring and student support models that promote one-to-one contact between tutor and student, overlook the possibility of a more empowering model based on peer support. Models that facilitate peer-led projects could help create supportive learning communities in which students are able to demonstrate the resourcefulness and agency advocated by Barnett, and overcome the isolation and individual burdens with which Bauman is concerned.

Allocation of time in tutor workload

There is a risk that a move towards a collective or peer model of student support might erode still further the allocation of time for tutors to work with students on support issues, and for tutors to access appropriate skills development and support. Institutions must remain alert to the fact that a number of studies from the 1990s to the present day have consistently identified workload issues and lack of institutional support as problematic in the delivery of student support. A move away from the individualised ethos of student support might enable a more appropriate model to prepare students for a contemporary career and lifestyle; it may even result in a reduction in the number of individual students seeking support from tutors. It will not, however, obviate the need for tutors to work in the affective domain with students, and there will still be a role for personal tutors. It is time, therefore, for institutions to take on board their ethical duty to support and recognise the student support work undertaken by individual staff.

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Ethical Issues in Student Support: Developing a Framework for Professional Ethical Development

A Discussion Paper presented at 13th Annual Conference for Staff and Educational Developers (SEDA)
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This discussion paper was developed using data from a research project funded by my own institution (UWIC) and also draws on data emerging from my doctoral research. My research explores the emotion work undertaken by higher education tutors and the institutional contexts within which it takes place. I have used a wide range of literature to develop a framework with which to analyse empirical data. This paper uses a very small selection of that literature to develop one of the themes emerging from the research – the ethical framework and value base within which support is offered, by higher education tutors, to students in individual tutorials.

Noddings (2003: 6) states 'the primary aim of all education must be nurturance of the ethical ideal'. For Noddings the ethical ideal contains three components – 'dialogue, practice and confirmation'. Particular emphasis is placed on the relationship between two parties in a caring educational interaction. She labels these parties 'the cared-for' and 'the one-caring'; in the higher education context we might reasonably translate these as student and tutor respectively. She also contends that being cared for is a significant force in the development of caring individuals (Noddings, 2002) suggesting that educational institutions 'can be deliberately designed to support caring and caring individuals, and this is what an ethic of caring suggests should be done' (2003: 182). Noddings's ethical ideal of 'dialogue, practice and confirmation' resonates with cyclical models of experiential learning in staff development. 'Confirmation' might take the form of feedback or 'dialogue' via peer or professional supervision that indicates to the tutor how well he or she is doing in 'practice'. This discourse of 'caring' will not resonate with all colleagues in higher education, many of whom will feel more comfortable with a discourse of *support* that requires us to care *about* rather than care *for* our students. Noddings points out that, in cases where a student is unresponsive or negative, or has exceptional support needs, the caring (or support) process can become burdensome, indicating the need for a process of care for the tutor. I propose that institutions need to ensure they have in place suitable support mechanisms that demonstrate they care about the support and development needs of tutors in developing their effective and ethical support work with students. This support and development should be located in a professionalism framework that incorporates accountability and responsibility on the part of higher education institutions and tutors.

My ongoing research project examines student-tutor relationships by facilitating the use of reflective journals which prompt tutors to explore their practice of working with individual students in tutorial settings. The research focuses on support work that takes place in the private space of the individual tutorial. This discussion paper draws briefly on initial interviews with tutors as research participants in the reflective journal project, and also utilises data collected from an electronic survey, in which almost 100 higher education tutors from a range of UK institutions and academic disciplines explore issues relating to their work supporting individual students.

Macfarlane (2004) is keen to point out that most lecturers acknowledge and negotiate ethical dilemmas as part of their higher education teaching practice. Macfarlane's data, collected from more than 200 participants via a variety of educational development courses and conferences, demonstrates the thoughtful way in which lecturers contend with the ethical issues and dilemmas presented in vignettes designed to explore appropriate tutor responses and actions. Some vignettes produced a variety of responses which Macfarlane related to individual attitudes and institutional cultures. We might consider the extent to which culture and practice of academic disciplines affect the manner in which tutors approach ethical issues and dilemmas. Becher and Trowler (2001: 148) reported a 'clear tendency to view the world from one's own disciplinary perspective', but Macfarlane (p126) rejects the idea that 'lecturers stand in starkly opposed camps' in relation to negotiating the balance between emotional engagement and professional distance. Macfarlane finds that most lecturers are aware that such dilemmas exist and are prepared to exercise agency in negotiating this balancing act as they develop an understanding of their professional practice. This discussion paper considers ways in which institutions and individual tutors can develop skills and support mechanisms required for developing their practice in this way.

Data from my electronic survey demonstrate a tendency for tutors to draw on their own experiences and resources for developing their student support practice. This was particularly the case for those having entered the higher education profession from previous professional backgrounds in which interpersonal communication and support skills were a major focus of the job (for example, social work, school teaching, nursing and professions allied to medicine). This is supported by findings from a companion survey of 30 lecturers on professional youth and community work degree programmes in which almost 80 % reported that their youth and community work skills and experience were the only resource they had to develop their practice of supporting students. Returning to the main survey, only 10% of respondents felt they had received comprehensive and adequate training for the student support role. 30% had extremely limited training or no training at all. So what of the tutors who do not have background skills and experiences on which to draw? The following comments from survey respondents are indicative of this situation:

If we do not know the procedure, how do we know if we have done it right (or stop the worry of doing something wrong!)

I am an academic, intense personal issues, including being mugged, having prolonged medical issues, unwanted pregnancy and autism/aspergers, are difficult to deal with essentially untrained

My reservation is that no real training/support/mentoring is given - you just do it.

When the Personal Academic tutorial system was introduced in my institution, all lecturers were obliged to engage in the role of tutor. I was willing to take on the role but felt some form of induction /training (particularly in counselling)was needed. The system was hurriedly put in place with no prior consultation with staff and no clear model of operation

Student support is simply seen as part of the responsibilities of a lecturer - and yet no formal training is provided. This is paradoxical considering the Universities claim to put students first. The longer I am involved in teaching the more my reservations about the role of lecturers in student support grows - there is a need to sort this issue out now and explicitly delineate the boundaries of the support that should be provided by lecturing staff and specialised support staff should do the rest.

Initial interviews with tutors taking part in the reflective journal study tells a similar story. One tutor described how she had been given a booklet outlining the university's policy on personal tutoring, but no further staff development or support. She had developed awareness of how to use active listening skills by seeking information from a friend who worked as a counsellor. She had been denied further professional development in this area by her line manager.

Another tutor was clearly struggling with an extremely challenging student support workload. This appeared to relate to the fact that she was taking on a counselling and support role with students, using skills she had developed in a previous professional role. Lack of support from the institution and from colleagues meant that she had no means of offloading, or of engaging in discussions that would enable her to explore the boundaries of her practice.

Of 84 responses to a question about resources available when dealing with difficult student support scenarios, all had some form of support on which to draw, but the source of support varied considerably. There were only 21 instances of support being offered via institutional mechanisms such as line managers or professional supervision. The data demonstrate that when tutors feel the need for care or support for themselves in dealing with stressful or distressing situations with students, this tends to come either informally from colleagues or from family and friends. By far the most frequent response was that tutors would turn to colleagues for support at difficult times. Initial interviews with tutors in the reflective journal study uncovered tremendous dissatisfaction with institutional support mechanisms. There were no experiences of support provided at institutional level, and each interviewee had one particular colleague who offered a listening ear at difficult times. All interviewees

had on many occasions offloaded to their partner or spouse about difficult student support issues, which had occasionally compromised student confidentiality. Partners and spouses were being utilised to fulfil the unmet support needs of tutors, which effectively meant that the student support function was being propped up by unpaid, unacknowledged and untrained labour.

It might be reasonable to assume that this evidence of informal or unofficial support mechanisms is indicative of the fact that they are needed. Applying Noddings's logic we might assume that support from colleagues, partners and spouses is part of the essential process of caring for the tutor when the student support scenario becomes challenging or burdensome. Whilst immediate colleagues were most commonly used for support, a number of survey responses also indicated satisfactory support had been received informally from colleagues working in student support services at the centre of institutions. This came in the form of information and advice, or an opportunity to offload.

I have two occasions when students have attempted or threatened suicide. On those occasions I contacted the head of Counselling service who was fabulous in the support she offered me.

There have been times when I have felt that a student's problems were beyond my capacity to deal with, and I have sought support from the Counselling Service or the Student Medical Practice, both of whom have been very helpful.

A student had academic progress issues due to domestic problems. I worked with the undergraduate office to support her with this.

Not all respondents were able to access support from colleagues, and some reported having requested support from student services or line managers which was subsequently refused. The following are indicative of survey responses from tutors who have experienced unmet support needs:

One example: acting as personal tutor to a student with obsessive compulsive disorder. Very little guidance given from Disability Department. Feeling that really not qualified to offer advice to this student, and that could be making matters worse.

Overwhelming number of students with difficult personal problems, ranging from unexpected pregnancy to bereavements and illness meant that I felt that I needed to get away from things.

Sometimes one gets upset dealing with students' problem. It is necessary to talk about this. Some counselling support for us would be useful. I once tried to get it from student services but (no surprises, eh?) it is only available for students. Staff have no problems? Or it isn't worth investing in supporting staff?

Suicidal student; felt like I had no-one to talk to and was very stressful

A student who was suicidal - I felt so utterly helpless despite a counselling background and I knew that the Uni support was woefully inadequate and this student needed a trained mental health professional.

An incident involving a student disclosure of suicide arose and I was refused supervision by my line manager.

Easton and Van Laar (1995) reported on a survey in which 97% of a sample of 231 tutors reported having worked with students on support issues including depression, anxiety, relationships and loneliness, as well as more practical issues such as finance and accommodation problems. They make the point that professionals working with client problems of this nature in settings such as counselling or healthcare would usually have in place appropriate training, support and supervision which resonate with professional and ethical guidelines. My findings suggest a lack of institutional leadership in developing an ethos of student support from which a clear sense of professional and ethical practice

can be understood and developed. The SEDA Professional Development Framework offers an excellent starting point for this, but I have found very little evidence that this is widely known or made use of.

Many survey responses indicated a sense of resentment that student support was located within bureaucratic procedures and institutional policy imperatives that had been imposed without consultation. Some tutors felt that in order to take forward their ethical understanding of the importance of student support, they were having to get by using whatever informal mechanisms they could develop. Some felt that by choosing to engage with the student support process they were taking on extra workload. This situation arose because some colleagues had not developed an ethical or professional understanding of the importance of supporting students, and the system enabled these colleagues to avoid supporting students by choosing not to engage with the process. Bureaucratic monitoring systems are unsuitable for implementing a process that takes place in private space. Successful implementation should be located in developing a sense professional and ethical responsibility for supporting students. The lack of a developed sense of professional and ethical responsibility also runs the risk of overlooking professional boundaries to deal with power relationships and the potential for inappropriate dependency relationships.

Evidence from my research suggests that generally tutors were keen to 'do the right thing' in their supportive interactions with individual students, but in the absence of a clearly defined sense of practice, many struggled with knowing what 'the right thing' consisted of. This struggle related both to the body of skill and knowledge required for effective practice, and the capacity for exercising sound judgement. Macfarlane's study drew similar conclusions, but we have both worked with samples of tutors who were engaged with the notion of ethical practice and higher education pedagogy. Studies of this nature cannot really capture the experiences of those who do not have a developed sense of the professional and ethical underpinnings of higher education pedagogy, as these individuals are unlikely to be motivated to respond. My own sample consisted almost exclusively of tutors who expressed an understanding of the role of student support as an essential strand of higher education pedagogy, yet many made mention of colleagues who did not share this view.

A virtue ethics model as suggested by MacIntyre (2007) might offer a way forward for professional development. This would encourage the development of character traits relative to the perceived role and culture of higher education practice, so would need to begin with developing some sense of the ethos of student support or personal tutoring. Those engaged with an idea of a higher education pedagogy or a sense of how students learn are likely to have developed an understanding of the significant impact of a student's emotional state on the ability to learn (Brockbank and McGill, 2006; Beard *et al.*, 2007). There is a role for educational leadership and staff development in ensuring that this is more widely understood via the scholarship of learning and teaching in higher education.

Hoyle and John's definition of *professionalism* (1995) is underpinned by a notion of the responsibility that is exercised by teachers and incorporates three elements. These are the body of skill and knowledge which is broadly agreed necessary for effective practice; the capacity for exercising sound judgement when faced with competing options and demands; and engagement with professional development, reflectiveness and ethics in order to ensure the teacher is equipped with the competences required to make effective judgements. Macfarlane (2004) and Scott (2004) each point out that there is a discrepancy between working with bureaucratic and procedural mechanisms and working within an identified framework of ethics. Scott purports that ethics have the potential to act as the glue that helps hold together an increasingly diverse higher education system and practice. It could be argued that the idea of a broad collective understanding of the ethics and values of higher education would offer the basis of a new professional identity from which higher education tutors can *speak back* to managerialism (Walker, 2001), which might be motivational for those not currently engaged with the scholarship of learning and teaching.

One of the planned outcomes of my ongoing research project is the production of a staff development framework for the effective development of personal tutoring skills. This will incorporate recommendations of the skills and knowledge base for effective practice, the underpinning ethos and ethical framework, and recommendations for how institutions should develop an ethic of care and support for personal tutors. The tables below present work in progress on developing a professional ethical framework for personal tutors, and a framework for institutional responsibility and action. They are offered, in this paper, as a framework for discussion, and have been influenced by Macfarlane (2004); Hoyle and John (1995) and the findings of my on-going research project.

Table 1: Developing Professional Ethical Framework for Personal Tutors

<i>Underpinning Professional Ethic</i>	<i>Moral Motivation</i>	<i>Authenticity</i>
Trustworthiness	<p>Willingness to recognise and manage the nature and effects of power relationships</p> <p>Not using our position to cause harm to a student, infringe their personal rights or to obtain any form of personal gratification</p>	<p>Concern to ensure that emotional intelligence is deployed for the benefit of enhancing learning and teaching, and not used in manipulative ways that attempt to influence a student's satisfaction with a the institution, the curriculum or the tutor</p>
Empathy	<p>Accepting a role in working with students on dealing with personal and emotional issues that exist outside the pedagogic relationship but may affect ability to learn</p>	<p>A genuine concern to demonstrate understanding and helpfulness in enabling students to recognise and address personal and emotional issues that are affecting their ability to learn</p>
Self-awareness	<p>Willingness and ability to engage with reflexivity and reflective practice as a means to equipping oneself with the competences required to make effective judgements</p> <p>Ability to recognise and work within appropriate boundaries of practice</p>	<p>Ability to recognise and deal with situations that risk putting self-interest or self-gratification above the interests of students</p>
Collegiality	<p>Not discussing with students criticisms about the practice of colleagues</p> <p>Being sensitive to the support needs of colleagues</p> <p>Engaging in dialogue with colleagues that explores the nature and boundaries of practice</p> <p>Awareness of the need to develop consistency and equity in workloads and practice</p>	<p>A 'way of being' that incorporates generosity, empathy, responsibility and openness, enabling a genuine relationship of mutual support with colleagues</p>

Table 2: Developing framework of institutional responsibilities

<i>Institutional Responsibility</i>	<i>Potential implications</i>
Facilitate the development of a collectively negotiated, discipline-specific ethos of personal tutoring that is underpinned by pedagogical understanding of the role of student support	Acceptance that pedagogical and academic judgement might sometimes present tensions with managerial and bureaucratic compliance issues Recognition that there is a need to develop an ethic of responsibility within or alongside accountability frameworks
Develop space (in the form of time and physical or virtual environments) in which tutors can develop dialogue and discussion to develop, monitor and support ethical and effective practice	Resource implications Academic leadership Staff development for managers and tutors
Develop and actively implement appropriate formal and informal support mechanisms for personal tutors to help avoid 'burnout' and to promote ethical practice	Academic leadership Resource implications Staff development for managers and tutors

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Appendix 8: Responses to Follow-Up Questionnaires

Responses to follow-up questionnaire, sent by email

Participant	Changes to practice in individual tutorials	Changes to workload and career trajectory	Effects of Reflective Workbook Exercise
Alex	<p>I have now read more widely about personal tutoring in a HE context although my own qualifications and experience are already particularly solid in one-to-one work with clients generally and so this extends to working with students.</p> <p>What is clear is that I differ from other tutors who have only experienced a HE environment, regardless of whether I am operating as a personal tutor or not I have good awareness of other services which students can access which complement or appropriately replace my support.</p> <p>No professional development in the form of training but I have read HE-contextualised literature on PT.</p>	<p>My role still allows for time to be devoted to action research where it benefits and impacts on the quality of our service provision.</p> <p>As we are always in demand from students I have been far better, since last year, at ring-fencing time for my own non-post-related research activities. As well as trying to continue to effectively manage relationship boundaries I have had to be more 'ruthless' when taking research time.</p> <p>My overall workload has significantly decreased to a manageable amount as there are now two advisors providing the intensive pastoral support required by our students.</p>	<p>In terms of change I think the workbook exercise allowed me time to engage in a much more 'dedicated' form of reflection on my tutoring (i.e. rather than quick debriefs with colleagues I was able to sit and think carefully).</p> <p>So, the impact of the workbook activity, for me, was mostly about reflection rather than specific change.</p>
Anne-Marie	<p>I needed to change my working practices as I found they were not sustainable for my personal well-being.</p> <p>I know but have to recognise further that I cannot be everything to everybody I have started to look after 'me' more;</p>	<p>I also wanted to have something for me – so have engaged with my research and PhD.</p>	<p>I have started to look after 'me' more; I am getting better at saying no to students, but need to improve this with colleagues, as often they can be as demanding of my time.</p> <p>These things have emerged over time, unfortunately these needed to be brought about as I became ill and was off work for almost 6 months with work related stress.</p>

Danielle	Our personal tutor system has become a little more embedded. This has meant that I see fewer students in crisis or with problems. I think the programme director gets most of them though rather than personal tutors. My main contact with individual students seems to be in a supervisory capacity.	Since doing the interview I have got two research grants, have become more involved in M level course issues and have 3 further PhD students. I see fewer students individually. Not sure Not sure whether this is because I am busier now and less available for students or if it's the new personal tutor system.	At the time I found it a very useful exercise to consider the impact dealing with students had on me. As I mentioned previously though, both my role within the department and the personal tutor system (if you can call it a system! I don't think it's very equitable) has altered and I have less individual contact with students requiring pastoral care – although not fewer personal tutees
Dylan	As a result of participating in this study I have read some articles and books on this subject of personal tutors ... I am now much more clear about the boundaries of my role and I am much happier to refer students on to others because I realise that others can do as good or a better job than me, that these students are not the same as my previous constituents and spending time in this way detracts from all the other work I have to do.	Over the past five years there has been significant change in the nature and the balance of workload. There is an increasing emphasis on research activity, knowledge exchange and income generation. There has been less emphasis on teaching and student support although in contrast there is a continuing focus on student satisfaction. However, any reduction in the latter is blamed on individual's inability rather than recognition of structural inconsistencies, unreasonable demands and mixed messages. In reality the amount of time spent with students is less and small groups have replaced many previous one to one encounters. I am also much more aware of other support services and pass these on to students more quickly. The follow up on this is often neglected as other demands take up the available time There is an imbalance in the workload with ever increasing demands, continuous forms of monitoring and a lack of investment in staff.	By taking part in this study, I now realise that what is happening in my institution is part of a wider development and that my experience will be similarly encountered by colleagues. It has enabled me to look at the behaviours round about me in a less personal manner and interpret these in the context of a changing work environment in HE. The changes were not apparent at the time but my awareness has been heightened due to this study. The changes have been permanent in the way that I now view the sector, the role of professional education within it and the true role of students within this sector. I am also more acutely aware of the ways in which professional educators are viewed by colleagues in more traditional disciplines within higher education, namely that we over teach, give too much support and put too much emphasis on pedagogy.

Erica	More conscious of the need to refer students with problems and difficulties to student advisory / counselling. Greater awareness that I can only listen and provide a certain degree of support relating to studies. Haven't read much in the way of other literature but would consider this when time in the summer.	No real change – in fact workload probably continues to increased (have taken on new admin/management role). But continue to manage time by meeting students via appointment as much as possible and demarcating particular days and times for specific activities.	I think the exercise was incredibly helpful – there are very few opportunities to reflect on practice in this way – and it has made me more aware of perhaps some of my strengths and weaknesses. I've become more conscious of the need to avoid over-empathising with students and to know that I can only provide so much support.
Mark	Working for [the university] has led me to become more laissez-faire about my students. What I mean by this is that I am less bothered about whether they turn up to tutorials etc, because they have other things going on in their lives that are more important. If those impinge on their academic work then so be it. I am sympathetic but always make my impact about how I can make things easier for them re their academic work (e.g. extensions, guidance with time management, essay planning etc)	Overall workload is HORRIFIC but that is because of my PhD, not students. Leading on from the last question, I find that I am putting more effort in with the students who put more effort into the course. If they turn up for tutorials, ask questions about essays etc then they get a lot more help and do a lot better. This is partly the nature of the beast but also partly because I am more inclined to bother if I feel that the student is also bothering. [The University] gives its lecturers a lot of trust (rightly) so interactions with students are fairly unregulated (and I mean that as a good thing).	I think that the exercise has made me more aware of where my professional boundaries were and where they should be. I think I had pretty clear boundaries in any case, but having gone through the process of self-analysis associated with the workbook and interview, I often find myself thinking 'I wonder what Jan would make of this or that situation'. Also, my student group is mostly adults rather than late teens. That means that it is more reasonable for me to take the line that they are just as capable and responsible as I am, and can therefore sort out their own problems just like I can. My job is to support them through the course that they are enrolled on. That might mean giving them latitude when crises occur and things come up in their daily lives (esp. as they are almost always part time), but that is where my responsibility (and expertise) ends. Seems a bit mean now I write it down, but there it is.

Martin	<p>As I have been in the post for some time I have become increasingly aware of the pressures on students that influence their learning. Often these are external – family responsibilities, finance, etc. Not directly to do with the course but influencing it and the experience. Thus the personal tutor role and my practice is influenced by these as well as the more central academic and practice issues faced. Perhaps illustrates Maslow’s hierarchy? Anyway, though we may have no direct influence on these wider factors and often have to refer to other professionals, who often – in my experience – cannot help a great deal due to resource restrictions the student experience is often greatly influenced by them and a tutor has to take them into account.</p> <p>Over time the idea that a student has to be personally resilient to cope has developed more strongly. This has always been the case but is perhaps more so today.</p> <p>In personal terms I have found it very useful to listen to other staff from here and elsewhere to draw lessons and reflect from what they say. A number have just retired from here and conversations with them, many from different courses/backgrounds, has allowed me to undertake personal reflection and enabled learning to emerge. Values and motivations are important here. I believe supervision would be if it was regular and not simply target driven. Perhaps central is the climate/atmosphere of the organisation? Is there time to talk and share</p>	<p>I came to undertake research and follow up my earlier work to hopefully complete a PhD. None of this has worked/happened due to changing organisational factors – less staff, bureaucracy, etc. I believe the structure of our organisation and the demands put on course tutors/leaders has squeezed a lot of this out. A lot of our admin support has disappeared.</p> <p>Having said this I have been supported on short courses but will have to create my own space to move on my own agenda of long term research. There have been opportunities to undertake short term research.</p> <p>Time with individuals --- more ‘welfare’ type time has been spent with students.</p> <p>I believe the workload has increased and the expectations of the team remain the same despite there being less staff.</p>	<p>I have really valued the time to think about some of the questions/issues being explored and it has pushed me to think of challenging my organisation to try for resources to undertake my research. It may not be possible here so perhaps may have to consider changing work – this may/will not be easy given family commitments and the current political and economic climate.</p>
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Will	beyond the targets culture? I don't have a great deal to do with regards to personal tutoring as such, my personal tutees tend not to see me unless they have problems (typically exam failures), but I continue to have one to one interactions with students in my role as a module leader. I find myself being increasingly robust in terms of referring students to where they can find out information for themselves – as we might have mentioned previously, we have an admin / academic split in the school so I often explain this to students and send them on their way. I think that this is generally best for the students as the admin people can provide them with the correct information quickly, it also works for me! Having said this, I should emphasise that where students need academic support I will spend time working with them to help them understand things like exam technique, critical writing and so on.	Additional (and in many ways unnecessary) teaching work has coincided with a busy research and writing period, which we all know is what's required for career progression. I have decided that if I push myself then I will succeed, of course there is room for efficiencies to be made but they will come in time. At times I feel that, apart from one colleague at another institution, it's quite a lonely job because even though I feel frustrated that I'm covering for colleagues not doing their job as well as they might in previous years there's nothing to be done about it other than for me to get on with it and ensure I don't do that to other people.	I'm not sure what changes have occurred <i>as a result</i> of this process – I suppose it's quite hard to isolate changes that occur as I develop anyway, from those that might be associated with the workbook / exercise. I've certainly found it interesting to consider my approaches / experiences across those particular question areas set out in the work book – the structure set out required me to consider my actions more explicitly than I normally would and it also got me to do some 'reflective learning' without feeling like the painful 'reflective' stuff we had to do in teacher training.
	I don't read about pedagogy so if I use any recognised techniques, it's through coincidence only!		

Responses to follow-up questionnaire, sent by email

Participant	Opportunities for reflection and peer discussion about practice	Contextual factors that shape working as a tutor
Alex	In terms of formal discussions our institution currently does not have a system to support this. I do speak to other colleagues informally as having a counselling background I know a number of people to talk to confidentially about how I work with students when I see them in individual tutorials. For me I see this as being a mini-version of 'supervision' in counselling and psychotherapy. It's a chance to reflect on responses, actions and demeanors in the interaction and determine what worked well and what could have been done better to make the relationship with the student more productive and well-boundaried.	I take more interest now in other institutions and what they have to deal with in terms of student numbers- it helps to build up a bigger picture that extends beyond the realm of an individual institution. I am used to working with limited resources have originally worked in compulsory education – resourcing impacts massively as it accounts for the environment we are tutoring in and the amount of time I feel I can give to any single individual (for example, as administrators are lost due to redundancy, I have to find time to do more routine administration – this has to come from somewhere.) I find some of the reward systems demoralising. For example a colleague has just won a major national teaching award and yet it is generally known amongst immediate team members that she is neither a proficient teacher, nor a researcher of substance and she avoids contact with students as much as she can – how is that motivating in gaining performance recognition for someone who devotes time to working actively with students? Models of personal tutoring do influence me – namely because none of them fully go far enough in dramatically getting an institution to change their approach to individual student support compared with basics such as money!
Anne-Marie	Myself and a colleague have changed our tutorial process. We now have set times on the timetable to try to reduce the number of times students 'drop in', which we found was both time consuming and often quite stressful. With this we now have allocated hours within our workload. We have also appointed a named team member to take responsibility for level 4 students.	There has been a change within my workplace with regards to available resources and the need to 'earn' more whilst maintaining a research profile. The developments made within my area have come about by myself and colleague working closely together and needing to 'survive' – drastic but true.

However, we do day that we will deal with 'emergencies' as and when they occur, but I think we still need to work with students on what could be classed as an emergency.

Danielle

I don't think that this has really changed. Still talk to the same key people.

Within our department the personal tutor system has become more embedded. However, I get the impression that those with problems end up seeing the programme director with their mitigating circumstances form, who then liaises with student services.

Dylan

The monitoring of work activities has moved from a collegiate, supportive environment to one of monitoring, critical evaluation and the setting of future targets. The practice mirrors a new managerialist thinking, business practice with a strong emphasis on outcomes. Thus increasing competitive demand has resulted in colleagues retreating into their caves of self reliance, protectionism and power play. The days of developing discourse through dialogue and conversation is largely diminishing as colleagues privilege and promote their own ideas rather than be open to the development of shared ideas and setting common understandings and meanings.

I have not been affected by increasing student number but there has been a reduction in resources and I have been asked to teach across a range of other programmes to meet staff shortages. The reward and recognition system has changed dramatically and the bar set higher each year. There is little or no chance of anyone being promoted to a higher grade unless they are internationally recognised and bring in substantial amounts of money. Policy and practice debates are limited as people concern themselves with their own circumstances and change management processes make people less confident about the future which decreases their ability to establish and contribute to current debates.

Erica

No real change here other than continue to use course team meetings and staff meetings as vehicles for sharing and learning experience.

The public spending squeeze is I think creating real fears about reduced resources and its implications. We are not losing staff but having to cut back on some activities. All the while I'm aware of the impending REF and we have increasing targets in relation to research income and publications. Policy and practice debates about HE are very real with a recent speech by the Minister indicating that the 'research impact' agenda will become more and more important.

Mark	<p>These have grown less since I only work for one uni now, whereas when I was interviewed I was working for three. In addition, I am (to be honest) more interested in finishing my PhD and getting various other bits and bobs published at the mo. My teaching work ticks over and I do a good job with it (in my opinion anyway) but it currently takes a back seat in my list of priorities. However, I still think that I put in more time and effort than I am really paid for, and also a lot more than many other lecturers that I am aware of.</p>	<p>Regarding debates about policy, practice and personal tutoring they don't touch me much in my work. In fact, I think that they can seem very high-profile to those involved with them but they don't have legs when it comes to the rank and file of university lecturers in non-education / pedagogic disciplines. Which is a shame, but stuff like marking, writing materials, admin etc also seems to take priority and then there is not enough time left for these sorts of discussions.</p>
Martin	<p>There is less time to talk and I suspect many staff are caught in a quandary about meeting targets at work, work life balance, etc. which means they keep their heads down to avoid situations – task and process issues?</p> <p>I feel for myself there is a network outside work where I discuss a lot of the issues. Not individual student issues but more cross cutting issues. This network involves former colleagues and friends as well as family. Perhaps a substitute for non-management supervision?</p>	<p>Centrally the increase in student numbers, less staff, more bureaucracy, increased expectations on staff, etc. influence the staff situation as well as the quality of the student experience.</p> <p>Students too have less time and this allied to the demands from outside influences their time allowance and commitment to ideas or work outside the immediate curriculum or course expectations. Does everything have to be quantifiable and awarded credit points? It can appear so which prescribes HE too much in my view.</p>
Will	<p>I tend to teach on my own at the moment so I don't have much opportunity to discuss my 'technique'.</p> <p>I've had colleagues come to my lectures and assess what I do – the feedback has been positive and they've said nice things about what I do, my student feedback (end of course student evaluations) has been good.</p> <p>I think about which lectures or tutorials have gone well or not, why etc and how I might change them next time around but this is largely a personal exercise because I don't see the point in repeating classes that don't really work.</p>	<p>While awareness of issues around student numbers and so on is important to reflecting on our teaching practice there is a risk that we (as academics) spend too much time bleating about it rather than challenging ourselves to re-think what we do, how we do it and how we can continue to deliver good quality in this changing context.</p> <p>I think that as the sector encounters more constrained resources then we should think more radically about how we use the resources we have. I get the sense that resource utilisation across the sector is really poor. I see little evidence of performance management in the sector so it's easy for people to do a poor job and continue or even for people to 'go missing' and avoid doing their job properly. I think that a stronger focus on setting objectives and measuring performance (and the consequences of good / poor performance) would help us make much better use of the resources we have – after all, many other organizations have to do this</p>

just to survive!